MY MAMIE ROSE

The Story of My Regeneration

OWEN KILDARE

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The Story of My Regeneration

By OWEN KILDARE

An Autobiography

New York

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To

L. B. K.

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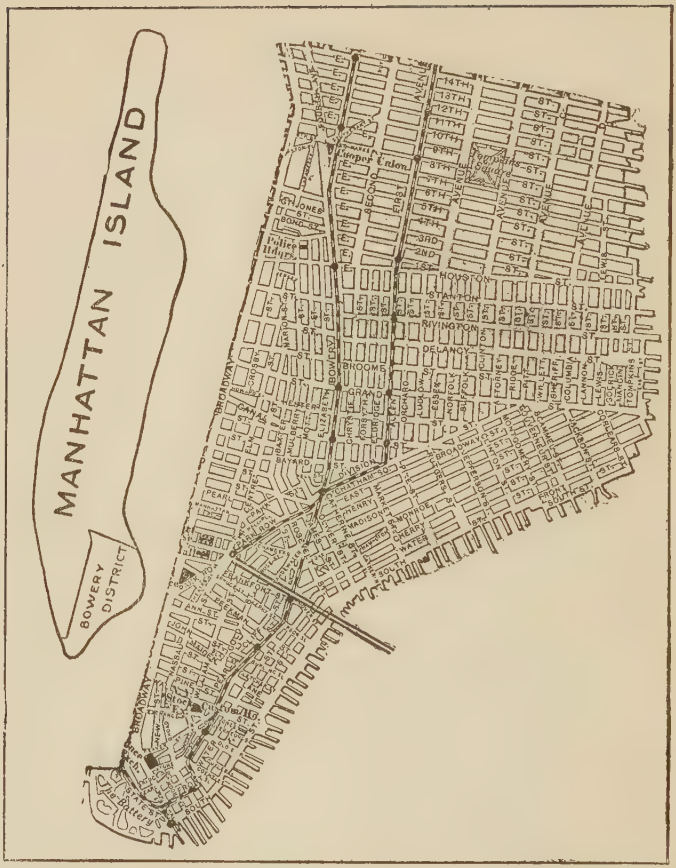
THE KID OF THE TENEMENT.



MAP OF THE BOWERY DISTRICT.

The map on the left shows how small a fraction of Manhattan Island (only a small part of New York City in itself) this world-famous district is. In this small section, called by Mr. Kildare "The Highway of the Foolish," he was born and lived, until he was thirty. Rarely did he leave it. In fact, he states that a large percentage of the people who are born here go through life with the very vaguest ideas of the world beyond—many living and dying without ever having passed north of 14th Street and West of Broadway. It is a strange world of strange people who live only from day to day and unto their daily needs.

MY MAMIE ROSE.

CHAPTER I.

THE KID OF THE TENEMENT.

MANY men have told the stories of their lives. I shall tell you mine. Not because I, as they, have done great and important things, but because of the miracle which transformed me.

If lives may be measured by progress mine may have some interest to you. When a man at thirty cannot read or write the simplest sentence, and then eight years later is able to earn his living by his pen, his story may be worth the telling.

Before beginning, however, the recital of how I found my ambition awakened, let me make my position unmistakably definite. I am not a self-made man, having only contributed a mite in the making. A self-made man can turn around to the road traveled by him and can point with pride to

the monuments of his achievements. I cannot do that. I have no record of great deeds accomplished.

I am a man, reborn and remade from an unfortunate moral condition into a life in which every atom has but the one message, "Strive, struggle and believe," and I would be the sneakiest hypocrite were I to deny that I feel within me a satisfaction at being able to respond to the call with all the possible energy of soul and body. I have little use for a man who cloaks his ability with mock modesty. A man's conscience is the best barometer of his ability, and he who will pretend a disbelief in his ability is either untruthful or has an ulterior motif.

In spite of having, as yet, accomplished little, I have confidence in myself and my ability, because my aims are distinctly reasonable. I regret that in my story the first person singular will be so much in evidence, but it cannot be otherwise. Each fact, each incident mentioned, has been lived by me; the disgrace and the glory, the misery and the happiness, are all part of my life, and I cannot separate them from myself. I know you will not disbelieve me, and I am willing to be confronted by your criticism, which, for obvious reasons, will not be directed against my diction, elegance of style and literary quality. I am not an author. I only have a story to tell and all the rest remains with you.

The Kid of the Tenement.

There was nothing remarkable about my early childhood. Most of the boys of the tenements are having or have had the same experience.

The home which sheltered my foster parents (my own father and mother died in my infancy, as I will tell you later) and myself consisted of two rooms. The rental was six dollars a month. Located on the top floor of an old-style tenement house in Catharine street, our home was lighted and ventilated by one small window, which looked out into a network of wash-lines running from the windows to tall poles placed in the corners of the yard. By craning your neck out of the window you could look into the yard, six stories below, and discover the causes of the stenches which rose with might to your nostrils.

The "front room" was kitchen, dining-room, living room and my bedroom all in one. Beside the cooking range in winter and beside the open window in summer was the old soap box on its unevenly curved supports, which, as my cradle, bumped me into childhood.

As may be surmised, both of my foster parents were Irish. My father, a 'longshoreman, enjoyed a reputation of great popularity in the Fourth Ward, at that time an intensely Irish district of the city. Popularity in the Fourth Ward meant a great circle

of convivial companions and a fair credit with the ginmill keepers. His earnings would have been considerable had he been a persistent worker. But men of popularity cannot afford to be constantly at work. It would perhaps fill their pocketbooks, but decrease their popularity. These periods of conviviality, hilarious intervals to my father, were most depressing to my mother.

Life in tenements is a particularly busy one of its kind. When all efforts are directed toward the one end of providing the wherewithal for food and rent, each meal and each rent day is an epoch-making event.

As soon as one month's rent is paid, each succeeding day has its own thoughts of dread "against next rent day." The thrifty housekeeper lays aside a share of her daily allowance—increasing it during the last week of the month—until, with a sigh of relief, she can say, "Thank God, we got it this time."

I firmly believe that a great share of the dread is created by the aversion to a personal meeting with the rent collector or agent. People who have to measure the size of their meals by the length of their purses are very apt to become a trifle unsteady in their ethics concerning financial questions. They are willing to pay their grocer or butcher, but

lose sight of the fact that the rent money is the payment for the most important purchase, the securing of their home. They are friendly with the shopkeeper, are often "jollied" by him into spending money otherwise needed, but regard the rent collector as their personal enemy.

There are many rent collectors, and, as in all greater numbers, quite a few are justly criticised for their manner. Many tenements are owned by men, who, though the owners, are only on a slightly different scale socially from their tenants. They are men, who, by great shrewdness or some fortunate chance, accumulated enough to make a real estate investment in their own ward. Naturally, they being familiar with the circumstances of their tenants and having a remnant of neighborly feeling for them, are more easily influenced.

Many blocks of tenements were then and are now owned by large estates. The management of these buildings is entrusted to real estate agents, who receive a commission on their collections, or to salaried representatives, who owe their position to the faculty of keeping rents up and keeping repairs down. These are the men who are hated by the poor.

It is said corporations have no souls, why then should a large estate, surely a corporation, have one? And there must be a soul to understand, to

feel the woe, the pleading that comes to it in halting, sob-broken speech. How, then, is one whose feeling is long ago calloused by the repetition of these tales of misery, to be stirred to more than a sneer by another variation of the old, old wail: "Have pity on us this once, we are so poor, so ill, so miserable."

Here the poor could be reproached for shiftlessness in household matters, for not practising sufficiently the principles of economy. The reproach would be perfectly justified and would touch one of the most potent causes for the existing conditions among the poor. No one lives more lavishly and knows less how to save than the poor. Their expense account is not based on a sanitary or monetary basis, but shapes itself according to temporary income.

"Plenty of money in the house" and rent day far in the distance, and many families will absolutely gorge themselves at table with food and drink, only to return on perhaps the very next day to tea and dry bread.

For this reason no social movements on the East Side are worthier of hearty support than those carried on to teach children, and especially girls, "How to keep house." Teach them how to keep house, and they will make homes.

If rent days are the fearful anticipations of tenement house life, meals and their preparation are the pleasurable anticipations of it. At morning, noon and evening the smells of cooking and frying waft from the open doors of the apartments into the halls. The doors are open for two reasons—for ventilation and to "show" the neighbors that more than the tea kettle is bubbling away on the range. Behind the closed doors there is no feast, just the tea and the bread and scheming how to explain this unwelcome fact to the neighbors.

My mother found her best hold on her husband's affections by catering to his appetite, which was one of the marvels of the neighborhood. When working he was very exacting in the choice and preparation of his food; so, when idle his wife would strive still harder to cheer him into better humor by culinary feats.

Besides this promiscuous cooking, there were mending, washing, darning and other housework to be looked after, and little time was left for sentiment toward me beyond an occasional affectionate pat on the head.

Now, take the mind, the heart of a child, and then consider the influence of such a barren existence on it. A child can do without coddling—yes, most boys do not, or pretend not to like it—but a child's

heart, sensitive as no other, hungers for a wealth of affection.

The child, a little ape, finding no outlet for his willing response to affection, seeks a field of mental activity in imitating the adults about him. And the models and patterns in tenement spheres are not those a child should imitate. All conditions there are primitive. To eat, drink, sleep and be clothed are the aims of life there, leaving but a small margin for emotions.

The forms of expression are also primitive and accepted. The worthy housewife, who, in a moment of anger at her husband's mellow state, should vent her feelings in an outburst of more emphatic than polite language, will not lose caste thereby, but will be told by sympathetic fellow-sufferers that "She did just right."

Among the men it is considered an indication of effeminacy or dudeism to utter one sentence without profanity. To be deemed manly one must curse and swear. Even terms of endearment are prefaced with an unintentionally opposite preamble.

There, not yet mentioning the other detrimental defects of environment, the child grows up, and then, when in the manhood days this foundation, faulty and vicious, breaks and crumbles to pieces and leaves naught but a being condemned by society

MR. KILDARE'S BIRTHPLACE IN CATHARINE ST.
The Star marks the window of the Kildare Tenement.

and law, and seemingly by God, there is an army ready to pelt this creature, cursed by its own existence, with law, justice and punishment, but not with one iota of the spirit which even now, in our matter-of-fact days, echoes the grandest message, "He is thy brother."

Such was the setting of the stage on which the drama of my childhood began. The part I played in it was not very interesting.

An adult man or woman can do with a minimum of space, but a child must have much of it. To romp and play and scheme some mischief requires lots of room, and there being not an inch of room to spare in tenement apartments, the children in summer and winter claim the street as their very own realm.

It is bad that it is so, for there is much in the street which is of physical and moral danger to the child. Hardly a day passes without having a boy or girl hurt by some passing vehicle. It is almost impossible to guard against these accidents. The drivers are careful. No one can make me believe that these men would wantonly drive into a swarm of playing children, but there are so many, so many.

Convince yourself of this. You need not have to travel very far. Take any street, east or west of the

Bowery, and the young generation, crowding before your very feet or jostling against you in innocent play, will tell you more effectively than my pen could of what the real need of the East Side is.

But then parks and play grounds do not bring rentals; tenement houses do, and, further, even the child-life of those districts is dependent on the whims of our patriotic ward politicians.

Among the very poor—and my parents were of that class—it is the custom to send out the children to pick up wood and coal for the fire. My mother, being constantly engaged in looking after the welfare of my father, had not very much time to spare on me, and I grew up very much by myself.

Even before it had become my duty to "go out for coal," I loved to take my basket and make my way to the river front to pick up bits of coal dropped in unloading from the canal boats or by too generously filled carts.

Among my playmates I held a very unimportant position, being neither very popular nor unpopular. I did not mind this much, as I felt, instinctively, that something was wrong and that I was not on a level footing with them. It is impossible for me to explain why I felt so at the time, but I can distinctly remember that quite often I felt myself entirely isolated.

No one minded me or censured me for my long absences from home, provided my basket was fairly well filled with coal. Then spells of envy often came to me. I envied the caresses given by mothers to their sons and, yes, I also envied the cuffs given to them for having spent too much time at the retail coal business.

I reasoned so then and I reason so now, that behind every whipping given to a child a father's or mother's love and justice is hidden. But even parental chastisement was denied me—a fact for which, according to popular opinion, I should have been thankful.

In this way I lived the dull life of a tenement house child, made more dull in my case by the lack of a certain inexplicable something in my relations to my parents and in my home conditions. I missed something, yet could not tell what it was.

It can hardly be termed a hidden sorrow, but make a boy ponder and worry about something, for which no explanation is vouchsafed to him, and he will get himself into a mental state not at all healthy for his years.

Close to the cooking range was an old box used as a receptacle for wood and coal. There was my seat, and from there I watched the little domestic

comedies and tragedies played before me with my father and mother as chief actors.

My father's popularity made our home the calling place for many visitors. At these visits the most frequently used utensil was the "can," or "growler," and the functions usually assumed the character of an "ink pot." Several houses in the ward had well proven reputations as "mixed ale camps," meaning thereby places where certain cronies could meet nightly and "rush the growler" as long as the money lasted. If the friends were more than usually plentiful, the whisky bottle, called always the "bottle," besides the "can," was kept well filled, producing a continuation of effects, sometimes running to fighting; at other times running to maudlin sentimentality. These occasions—no one knows why—are called "ink pots."

My father's house was in a fair way to become listed among the well established "mixed ale camps." In those days no law had yet been passed making the selling of "pints" of beer to minors a punishable offense, and children of both sexes were employed until late in the night, when the bar-rooms were crowded with drunken and boisterous men, to "rush the growler" for their seniors at home. The children did not object to it, as a few pennies were always given to them for the errand.

I, also, had to make these journeys to the nearest saloon, and, also, did not mind it for the above mentioned reason. Sometimes, after returning from my trip, a man would ask me to sing him one of the popular songs of the day, but I would refuse with the diffidence of a boy. My father never missed these opportunities to inform his friends that "that brat ain't good for nothing. Don't bother with him."

I began to dislike my foster father, rather than hate him. More than once I met his casual glance with a bitter scowl.

A PAIR OF SHOES.

CHAPTER II.

A PAIR OF SHOES.

It was winter, still. I was running about bare-footed. This was preferred by me to having my feet shod with the old shoes of my mother. She had a small foot, yet her old shoes were miles too large for me, and furthermore, always made me the butt of the jeers and jibes of my playmates in the street. Therefore, I never wore the cast-off shoes unless snow or ice was on the ground.

But whether bare-footed or slouching along in my unwieldy cast-offs, the comments became so personal that I resolved to ask my father for a pair of real, new shoes.

The moment for presenting my petition anent the new shoes was ill chosen.

My father was experiencing a period of idleness, and had reached that intense state of feeling which prompted him to declare with much banging on the table that "there wasn't an honest day's work to be got no more, at all, by an honest, decent, laboring

man." At the moment my mother was deeply engaged in the task of mollifying her husband's irascibility by preparing some marvelous feat of cooking, and was not at liberty to give me her most essential moral support.

My request was received in silence. It was an ominous silence, but I did not realize it.

I insisted.

"I want a pair of shoes all to myself, the same as other boys have."

"Oh, is it shoes you want? New shoes? Shoes that cost money, when there ain't enough money in the house to get a man a decent meal. I'll give you shoes; indeed I will."

Still I insisted. Then that which, perhaps, should have happened to me long before, was inflicted upon me. I was beaten for the first time, to be beaten often and often again afterward.

The whipping roused my temper. From a safe distance I upbraided my father for punishing me for demanding that which all children have a right to demand from their parents, to be properly clothed. This incited his humor; but, after his laugh had ended, he told me in the most direct and blunt way of my status in the family, and also informed me that if he felt so disposed he could at any time kick me into the street, where I, by right, belonged.

Without mincing his words he told me the story of my parentage. At least, he told me that I was no better than an orphan, picked from the gutter, and kept alive by the good nature of himself and his wife.

It was all true.

In the days to follow I learned more and more about my parents from the legendary lore of neighborly gossip. And even he, my foster-father, could say naught but good about my father and mother, if he did hate their son.

No, I should not say he hated me. Patrick McShane had a good heart, but permitted it too often to be poisoned by the poison of the can and bottle.

All I know about my own father is that he was a typical son of the Emerald Isle. Rollicking, carefree, ever ready with song or story, he was a universal favorite during his sojourn in the ward where he had made a home for himself and his wife for the short time from his arrival in this country until his death.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of meeting the owner of the building where our home had been and where I was born. In spite of his old age, he still remembered my father.

"Do you know, my boy, your father was a fine man? The same as any man, who lets nice apart-

ments to tenants, I had to see that rents were regularly paid, and I always did that without being any too hard on them. But it was all different with your father. There were a few times when his rent was either short a few dollars or not there at all, but before I had the chance to get angry he'd tell me a story or sing me a ditty, and instead o' being mad I'd leave and forget all about my rent. Ah, indeed, Owney, boy, a fine man was your father."

Not much of an eulogy, but much, very much, to me, the son. I have nothing, no likeness, no photograph, to help my mind's eye see my parents; and, therefore, any tribute, no matter how trifling, paid to the memory of my father and mother goes toward perfecting the picture of them, fashioning in my soul.

My mother was a French woman, who married my father shortly before departing for this country from France, where he had gone to study art. They knew very little of her in the district. All her life seemed to be centered in her husband, and she was rarely seen out of her own rooms. The only breathing spells she ever enjoyed were had on the roof—quite convenient to the top floor, where the home was—and there she would get a whiff of fresh air, to the accompaniment of one of my dad's songs.

Why could I not know them?

A Pair of Shoes.

Not being amply provided with funds, my parents, shortly after their arrival in this country, were compelled to take apartments on the top floor of the tenement house in Catharine street, where I was born.

My mother died at my birth; my father had preceded her by three months.

Sad is the fate of a baby orphaned in a tenement house. Each family has little, and many to subsist on it.

But I, the orphaned babe, was singularly fortunate.

Even the lives of the poor are not devoid of romance, and, owing to one, I found a home.

Not so very long before my parents made their domicile in the Fourth Ward, Patrick McShane, one of the most popular and finest looking young men of the neighborhood, had "gone to the bad." He had neglected his work to share in the many social festivities—otherwise, "mixed ale camps"—until his sober moments were very few and far between.

As soon as his status of confirmed drunkard was established, he was not as welcome as formerly at the many gatherings. The reason for it was his irascible temper while under the influence of drink.

Finding himself partly ostracized, he kept to the

water front, spending his days and nights down there.

Facing the river is South street. At one of the corners was the gin mill and legislative annex of a true American patriot and assemblyman. Always anxious to pose before his constituents as a man whose charity knew no bounds, this diplomat, this statesman, had given a home to his niece, the daughter of his deceased brother. Perhaps it was just a coincidence that, on the same day, on which his niece became a member of the household the servant girl was discharged.

At any rate, Mary McNulty found little time to walk the sidewalks of Catharine street, as was the wont of the belles of the ward. Even would she have had the time for it, she would not have availed herself of it, for one very good reason. Mary McNulty was not beautiful.

During her first few weeks in the neighborhood she had been quickly christened "wart-face" by the boys on her appearance in the street, and, while not supersensitive, she determined to forego the pleasure of being a target for these personal comments.

Thereafter, she only left the house at nightfall to walk down to the end of the pier opposite to the gin mill of her uncle. During one of these nocturnal

rambles she met Patrick McShane. He was lying in drunken stupor on the very edge of the dock, and in danger of losing his balance. Mary woke him up, lectured him and then gave him money. Before sending him away, she told him to be there on the following evening.

Regular meetings were soon in order, and it was not long before Mary conceived the idea of reforming Patrick McShane.

McShane was willing, and, one day the entire ward was startled into unusual surprise by hearing of the marriage of Patrick McShane and Mary McNulty.

To give credit where credit is due, it must be recorded that McShane, for quite a while, inspired by the devotion of his wife, improved wonderfully in his habits and walked along the narrow road of sobriety with nary a stumble. But, after about a year of wedded life, he permitted himself occasional relapses into the old ways, multiplying them in time.

It is hard to tell if all the hope of his ultimate reformation died out in the heart of his wife. She became very quiet, catering more carefully to his creature comforts and never offering any remonstrance.

But there must have been a void, a yearning to receive and to give a little affection, and when "the

lady in front"—my mother—died and left her orphan, Mary McShane would not let it go to the "institution," but took it into her own humble home.

And for this dear little woman, whose entire life was one of self-sacrifice, devotion and humiliation, a prayer goes from me at every thought of her.

It can hardly be expected that I, a boy of seven years of age, grasped the full significance of the information imparted by my foster father. Only two points appeared very grave to me. Should the fact become known to my playmates that I was an orphan—not distinguished from a foundling by them—and that I had sailed, so to speak, under false colors, my fate would have been one full of persecution and sneering contempt. I silently prayed and then beseeched my foster mother to keep the matter a profound secret.

The other point of importance was that the street, "where I, by right, belonged," assumed a new aspect. Having had plenty of evidence of the impulsive spirit which ruled our household, something seemed to tell me that it was not improbable that the threat of my expulsion would be fulfilled, and I began to consider my ultimate fate from all sides.

The bootblacks and newsboys and other young chaps, who were making their precarious living in the streets, became personages of great interest to

me. I watched their ways, and even found myself calculating their receipts. It was quite clear to me that, should my foster father drive me from the house, I should have to resort to some makeshift living in the streets.

All this put me in a preoccupied state of mind, which does not sit naturally on a child. I became more quiet than ever, and, in the evening, from the wood box behind the cooking range, watched our home proceedings. Most times they were very noisy, and my quietness seemed to grate on the ears of him whom I had ceased to call "father," and was then addressing more formally as "Mr. McShane," which also annoyed him.

Can you not read here between the lines and understand how a certain something became more and more stifled within me? Perhaps I was unreasonable or lacking in gratitude, but I was a child and still hungered and hungered and longed for that which, as yet, had not come into my share.

But if Mr. McShane would not listen to my plea for shoes, my good, dear "mum" had heard my request and understood the motive of my insistence. Happily, children's shoes do not involve enormous expenditure, and so, on a certain eventful day, "mum" went to her savings bank, the proverbial stocking, took the larger part of it and made me the

proud possessor of a pair of real, new shoes, the first of my life. Bitterness, sulking and wailing were all forgotten and wiped away as if by magic, and my feet, in their new casings, seemed to step on golden rays of sunshine. If I add to this that I had never had a toy of any kind you will be able to measure my sensation.

The real, new shoes were not an altogether free gift. It had been agreed between "mum" and me that I was to pay the equivalent for them by increased collectibility in the retail coal business.

The following day saw me starting out for the coal docks with the very best of intentions. I began to fear that we would not be able to find room for all the coal I meant to carry home that day. Tons of coal began to heap themselves in my vision, until, perchance, my eyes fell on the real, new shoes.

It became my unavoidable duty to let my footgear be seen.

Many detours were made, and so much time was wasted in exhibiting my shoes to the thrilling envy of my comrades that the accumulation of coal suffered in consequence. The awakening from my dream of glory came with the end of the day, when it required all my remaining buoyant spirits to nerve me for my reception at home.

The coal basket was dreadfully light.

A Pair of Shoes.

My home coming was very ill-timed. Mr. McShane was in the throes of another idle period, which did not preclude credit at the neighboring saloons. Had there been "company" I might have been able to escape his wrath, but, having sat there all alone—that is, without male companionship—and his wife never daring to reply to his sarcastic flings, I was just the red rag for the bull.

"Ah, and so you're home at last? Mary, have you no hot supper ready for this young gentleman, after him being hungry from working so hard at getting about ten pieces of coal? Oh, and new shoes are we wearing now, ain't that nice!" Then, with a quick change of tone and manner, "Come here, you brat, come here to me!"

"Leave the boy alone, Pat!" interposed "mum," but I knew, as she did, that it was futile.

I have no difficulty in remembering it all. In a dull, heavy way I felt that the crisis had come.

At the ending of the scene, my shoes, my real, new shoes, were torn from my feet. Everything within me rebelled against that. Life without those shoes was not worth living, and I stormed myself into a frenzy, which did not leave me until I found myself, propelled by a swift leg movement, on the floor of the dark hallway—minus my shoes.

The long expected had come. I had thought

myself prepared for this moment, yet found myself stunned and bewildered. What was I to do? The street "where I belonged" now seemed to belong to me, but I did not look quite as stoically as before at the prospect before me.

"Besides, how can I go out without shoes?" I reasoned, forgetting the fact that, only quite recently, shoes had become necessities to me.

But the truth was—and will you blame me?—that from the crack at the bottom of the door came a tiny streak of light, which told a vivid tale of all I was in danger of forfeiting. How often I had growled at my fate; now, behind that door, lay a paradise.

I crouched there in the dark corner of the stairs leading to the roof. How long I shivered there I do not know. All my senses were alert and ready for the slightest alarm. Once I heard pleading and emphatic denial within, and then all was still—still for a long while.

My gaze was fixed on the door. It seemed hours—perhaps it was—before I heard a slight creaking and saw the reflection of more light on the hallway floor. It disappeared as quickly as it had appeared, and then it was dark and quiet again.

But why was that door opened? Something must have happened. I dragged myself to the

threshold of my lost home, felt around and found —my shoes, my real, new shoes. And then I tried hard to cry, but could not. The crust had become too hardened.

The crisis had come, was passed, and the curtain fell on my childhood. Ages cannot be measured by years.

A NOMAD OF THE STREETS.

CHAPTER III.

A NOMAD OF THE STREETS.

SEVEN years old, I stepped into the street, where, by right, I belonged, no longer a child, to begin the journey, which, through many years in the valley, led me to the heights.

It was a bleak December night.

Can you not draw yourself the picture of the boy starting on his way—whither?

I stood for some time in the doorway. A policeman loomed in the distance. Boys cannot bear them in day time, how much less at night. To be "collared" by a "cop" at this hour meant a stay in the station house and a visit to the police court. I put myself in motion.

With cap pulled over my ears and hands pushed into my pockets, I started in the direction of the Bowery and Chatham street, now called Park Row. I halted under a lamp-post to determine on my course.

"Uptown" was an entirely unknown region to

me. "Downtown" was not much more familiar, but, somehow, I knew that that was the place where all the newsboys came from.

I turned to the left and walked and ran—the night was bitterly cold—down Chatham street until I came within view of the City Hall. So far I had been once or twice before on some adventurous trip, but not beyond that. Though I did not realize it at the time, I stood on my jumping-off place, ready to jump into the unknown.

I paused for a while, looking into the darkness before me. In those days, before the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge, City Hall Square was not as brilliantly lighted as now. I stood there until the biting cold made me move on.

My eyes were watery from the meeting blasts, and, stumbling on, I almost fell on top of a layer of diminutive humanity. Before I had time to draw my stiffened hands from the pockets to wipe my eyes, I felt a welcome sensation of warmth, thick, intense, damp, ink-permeated warmth.

The warm current came from the grating over the pressroom of a newspaper. This open-air radiator only measured a few feet, yet, at least, fifteen boys were hugging it as closely as their mothers' breasts. The iron frame was entirely invisible, and my share of warmth coming from it was very trifling.

But, even so, only a few minutes of this straggling cheer was afforded to me.

Just as some of the numbness began to thaw out of my limbs, the cry—ever and ever familiar to the newsboy—"Cheese it, the cop!" rang out, and, like a horde of frightened sprites, the boys scampered away, I bringing up the rear.

We raced around the corner into Frankfort street and stopped in a dark hallway, which seemed to be the headquarters of this particular crowd. It was not warm in there, but, at any rate, it was a shelter against the cutting gusts of night winds, playing their stormy games of "hide-and-seek" around the blocks facing Park Row.

Following the example of the others, I cuddled up in a corner, and tried to forget my troubles in sleep. Just dozing, preliminary to falling into sounder sleep, I was suddenly and swiftly aroused by a grasp and a kick, and informed that I had usurped a corner "beeslonging" to a habitue of this dismal hostelry.

I had yet to learn that a newsboy will claim everything in sight, to relinquish it only by defeat in fight, and meekly submitted to my dispossession. The late comer took a bundle of newspapers from under his arm and carefully proceeded to prepare his bed. First, he spread a number of sheets on

the floor; then built a pillow from the major part, and, at last, proceeded to cover himself with the remaining papers.

The light was dim, still, it was enough to show him my discomfiture.

"Say," he addressed me, "what's the matter, ain't you got no place to sleep? I'll tell you what I'll do. If you don't kick in your sleep, I'll let you lie down longside o' me." Then, as an afterthought, "It'll keep me warmer, anyhow."

Most emphatically and impressively did I assure him that my sleep was absolutely motionless, and from that night dated a partnership and friendship which lasted for many years.

In later years I have often wondered why I and all the other boys who comprised the newspaper-selling fraternity of that day always landed in Park Row, and in the midst of the future colleagues? It seemed to be a well defined destiny. Behind the coming of each new recruit was the little tragedy, which had made the leading actor therein a stray waif of the streets. And, no matter where the tragedy had happened, whether in Harlem or in the First Ward, the district along and above the Battery, they all found their way to Park Row.

The life of the newsboy is full of action. His personal struggle and business is so absorbing that

he has no time for useless speculation. The advent of a newcomer is not signalized by a very warm reception. He is neither hampered by professional jealousy or suffered by tolerance. The field is open to all, and it rests with the boy how he will fare. However, in spite of this almost essential selfishness, impulsive outbursts of good nature are a characteristic of this most emotional creature, the newsboy. My apprenticeship in the fraternity owed its beginning to one of these spontaneous outbursts.

It was quite early when, chilled to the marrow, I awoke in the drafty hallway. My new and independent existence was begun with my first great sorrow. Here the temptation is very strong upon me to tell you that remorse, anguish and despair were racking my soul; that it was homesickness or a great longing for all I had left behind me. But putting this temptation behind me, I must confess that my sorrow was of the most material kind. I missed my coffee.

Across the street was Hitchcock's coffee and cake saloon. Through the shivery morning air, every time a patron entered or left the place, a cloud of greasy, spicy aromas came wafting to the frozen little troupe leaving their dreary abiding place. My future colleagues had so often had this torture inflicted on them that, now, with just an envious sniff,

they could bear it with stoical fortitude. I, still a weakling, stopped, as if transfixed, inhaled the perfumed currents and most solemnly swore that, with my very first money, I would buy the entire stock; yes, even the entire coffee and cake saloon.

Alas, Hitchcock's is still doing business.

The next question presenting itself was, how was I to get the "first" money?

Newsboys work and play in cliques. The particular gang, with which I had thrown my lot, had its rendezvous in Theatre Alley. It was the assembling and meeting place for all the members, those who had slept in "regular" beds and those who had "carried the banner"* in the Frankfort street hallway. This distinction did by no means establish two different social strata among us. Fate was so uncertain that the aristocrat of the night before, who had rested his weary limbs on a "regular" bed, was very apt to fight on the following night for the possession of the corner in the hallway, which "beeslonged" to him.

Beyond giving me a scrutinizing look, none of the boys took heed of me, and did not object to my following them. Arrived in Theatre Alley, we met the leader of the gang, who had the proud distinction of being about the only one who had a "home

* To spend the night without a bed.

to go to" whenever he felt like doing so. The same qualities, which, since then, have made him a leader in politics and have led him to membership in legislative bodies, were even in that day in evidence.

In parenthesis let me say that I am not blessed with personal beauty. Add to this that my appearance presented itself rather grotesquely and dishevelled on that eventful morning, and you will understand why the leader's searching eye singled me out from the rest.

"Are you a new one?" he asked me.

I answered in the affirmative.

"Going to sell papers?"

Again the affirmative.

"Got any money?"

Now a convincing negative.

Then, as now, our leader was sparing in the use of words. At the end of our brief interview, I was "staked" to a nickel to buy my first stock of papers, and those who know Tim Sullivan will also know that I was not the first or the last to get "staked" by the Bowery statesman.

He not only furnished my working capital, but also taught me a few tricks of the trade and advised me to invest my five pennies in just one, the best selling paper of the period.

So, in less than twelve hours after leaving what

had been for several years my home, I was fully installed as a vendor of newspapers.

Then began the usual existence of "newsies," eating and "sleeping" when lucky, and "pulling through somehow" when unlucky. I stuck to that business for over ten years.

The life of the streets did not at all disagree with me. My childhood had been full of bitterness, childish bitterness, and I had a dull longing to make the world at large feel my revenge for having dealt so unkindly with me. Whatever good traits there had been in me were quickly and willingly transformed into viciousness. This helped me to become a leading member of our gang of boys.

Among us there was none so absolutely orphaned as myself. Those who were orphans had, at least, their memories. I did not even have them.

In odd, emotional moments, one or another would let his thoughts stray back to some still loved and revered father or mother, or would confess to having crept up to his former home, at some safe time, to have a peep at forfeited comforts. I welcomed these references and day dreams of my colleagues, but solely because they were utilized by me as pretenses for inflicting my brutality on those who had uttered them.

There is a question, a number of questions, to be

asked here. Why did I do this? Was it because I was naturally vicious, or because I wanted to stifle a certain gnawing in my heart by my ferociousness?

A strange reasoning, the last, perhaps; but in years I was still a child, and if a child has but little in his life to love, and that little is taken out of his life, that child can turn into a veritable little demon. Those, whom I had believed my parents, turned out to be nothing more than charitably inclined strangers; that what I had believed to be my home, proved but a refuge, and my boyish logic saw in this sufficient cause to envy those, who had all this behind them and to give vent to this envy in the most ferocious manner.

That was the tenor of my life as a newsboy. I had enough callousness to bear all the hardships without a murmur. One ambition took possession of me. I wanted to be a power among newsboys. I wanted to be respected or feared. As I did not care which, I succeeded in the latter at the expense of the former. The heroes of newsboys are always men who owe their prominence to physical prowess. I chose as my models the best known fighters of the day.

As with all other "business men," there is keen rivalry and competition among newsboys. The only difference is that, among the boys, the most

primitive and direct way is the most frequent one employed to settle disputes. Some men, after great sorrows or disappointments, seek forgetfulness in battle, being entirely indifferent to their ultimate fate, and they always make good fighters. My position was not altogether dissimilar from theirs. What little I had known of comfort and affection was behind me; my mode of life at that time had no particular attraction for me, and my only ambition was to conquer by fight, and, therefore, I made a good fighter.

In all those long years I cannot recall more than one incident which stirred the softer emotions of my heart.

A newcomer, a blue-eyed, light-haired little fellow, had come among us, and was immediately chosen by me as my favorite victim. Certain traces of refinement were discernible in him and this gave me many opportunities to hold him up to the ridicule of our choice gang of young ruffians. I hated him without knowing why.

One day I saw him standing at the corner of "the Row," offering his wares with the unprofessional cry: "Please, won't you buy a paper?"

It was a glorious chance to "plant" a kick on one of his shins, and thereby to relieve myself of some of my hatred. Stealthily I crept up behind him, and

was on the point of sending my foot on its mission, when two motherly-looking women stopped to buy a paper from "the cherub." Wits are quickly sharpened in a life on the streets, and I realized at once that my intended assault, if witnessed by the two ladies, would evoke a storm of indignation.

I immediately changed front, and endeavored to create the impression that my hasty approach had been occasioned by my desire to sell a paper.

"Poipers, ladies, poipers," I cried, but was barely noticed.

The "cherub" claimed all their attention.

"What a pretty boy!" exclaimed one. "Have you no home, no parents? Too bad, too bad!"

All this was noted and registered by me for a future reckoning with the recipient of so much kindness.

My heart was shivering with acid bitterness.

"Never me, never me!" and the misery of many loveless years rang as a wail in my soul.

Just as the woman, who had spoken, was about to hand a dime to my intended scapegoat, her companion happened to turn and see me.

"Oh, just look at the other poor fellow."

The exclamation was justified. I was a sight. However, my dilapidated clothes and scratched face

owed their pitiful condition to much "scrapping" and not to deprivations.

Again she spoke.

"Here, poor boy, here is a penny for you."

With a light pat on my grimy cheek and one of the sunniest smiles ever shed on me, she was gone before I could realize what had happened. There, penny in hand, I stood, dreaming and stroking the cheek she had touched, and asking myself why she had done so.

Somehow, I felt that, were she to come back, I could just have said to her: "Say, lady, I ain't got much to give, but I'll give you all me poipers, and me pennies, and me knife, if you'll only say and do that over again."

The "cherub" also was a gainer by this little touch of nature. I forgot to kick and abuse him that night.

There was nothing dwarfish about me, and my temperament made me enjoy the many "scraps" which belong to a street arab's routine.

Park Row was and is frequented by the lesser lights of the sporting world. Our boyish fights were not fought in seclusion, but anywhere. Being a constant participant in these "goes," as I was almost daily called upon to defend my sounding title of "Newsboy Champion of Park Row" against

new aspirants for the honor, myself and my fighting "work" soon became familiar to the "sports," who were the most interested of the spectators.

I was of large frame, my face was of the bulldog type, my muscles were strong, my constitution hardened by my outdoor existence in all sorts of weather, and, without knowing it, my advance in the art of fisticuffs was eagerly watched, with the hope of discovering in me a new "dark horse" for the prize ring.

Among the men who had followed my progress in boxing were such renowned sports as Steve Brodie, Warren Lewis, "Fatty" Flynn, "Pop" Kaiser and others of equal prominence. In due time overtures were made to me. I was properly "tried out" on several third-rate boxers, and said good-by to the newsboy life to blossom out as a full-fledged pugilist.

Before long I began to have *higher* ambitions. It was the day of smaller purses and more fighting, and I determined to fight often so as to accumulate money quickly. I had no definite idea why I wanted to accumulate money with such feverish haste. I had some dim desire *to wanting* to have a lot of it, to having the sensation of being the possessor of a roll of bills, and, this being the only

road open to me toward that goal, I was eager to travel it.

That was my ambition at the age of seventeen, the age when boys prepare themselves to be men in the fullest and only sense of the word. My boyhood, dreary as my childhood, closed behind me without a pang of regret on my part. I was aspiring according to my lights and my aspirations spelled nothing more or less than degradation.

LIVING BY MY MUSCLE.

CHAPTER IV.

LIVING BY MY MUSCLE.

The manly art of self-defense, as practised then, was unhampered by much law or refinement. Still, with all this license, I was too brutish to make a successful prizefighter. My sponsor in this sporting life soon learned that I had a violent temper.

Time and time again I was matched to fight men who were not physically my equals, only to be defeated by them. It was useless to endeavor to impress me with the argument that these fighting matches were merely business engagements, in the same way as the playing of a part by an actor.

I fully understood all that was pointed out to me; would adhere to my instructions for two, perhaps three, rounds of fighting, then would forget all, rules, time limits and all else, to "sail in" with most deadly determination to "do" my opponent at all hazards.

During my brief career as pugilist I only met one man who was of the same brutish temperament as

myself—Tommy Gibbons, of Pittsburg—and we fought four encounters.

Of the same age as myself, Gibbons had earned for himself a well-founded reputation for viciousness. He had never been defeated in his own state, and the promoters of this "manly" form of sport were anxious to find a more vicious brute than he to vanquish him.

I was chosen for this mission.

A paper manufacturer, still doing business in New York City, after seeing me "perform" in trial bouts, was induced to "put up" the necessary money for my side of the purse, and we were matched to fight in Pittsburg.

We "weighed in" at one hundred and forty pounds.

This, our first encounter, lasted twenty-seven rounds. The "humanity" of our seconds and backers prevented us from going any further. Our physical condition was the cause for stirring that "humanity."

We were smeared with blood, but that alone would not have been sufficient to terminate the fight. A broken arm, a torn ear, a gash from eye to lower part of cheek, constituted Tommy Gibbons' principal injuries. I was damaged to the extent of two broken thumbs and a broken nose, not mentioning

minor disfigurements. But, what of that? Had not the noble cause of sport derived a new impetus from our performance? Had not the hearts and aspirations of the "select" crowd of spectators been moved to higher emotions?

We had behaved so right manfully, that, at the ringside, we were matched again for another meeting. In that, after seventeen rounds, I was declared the winner on a "foul" of Gibbons.

Again we were matched, this time to fight according to London prize ring rules—they permitting more latitude for our brutish instincts. It resulted in a "draw," but not until we had entertained the very flower of the sporting world for forty-three rounds.

Not yet satisfied as to which one of us was the greater brute, another meeting was arranged, and I had the proud distinction of being the victor in this fight of eleven rounds.

Poor Tommy Gibbons took his defeat very much to heart. His fistic prestige was gone, and he went speedily to "the bad." He ended his busy life at the hands of the hangman, paying therewith the penalty for one of the most horrible murders ever committed.

Too bad that such a promising light in the sporting world should meet with such ignoble end!

My backer, the paper manufacturer, who did so much, by effort and expenditure, for the cause of sport, is still on my list of acquaintances. He is eminently respectable, the father of an adoring family, the model for striving young men, a pillar of his church, a power in commercial life, and, withal, an enthusiastic follower of the Manly Art of Self-Defense, provided the specimen of it is not too tame.

Apropos of the manly art of self-defense I want to record my individual opinion that it is a lost art, if it really has ever been an art. In the knightly art of fencing, skill, artful skill, is necessary and acquired. Not so in boxing; at least not in that branch of boxing which is only practised for money. Men who step into the ring for a "finish fight" are not prompted by the desire of giving a clever exhibition of boxing. Their only desire—if the fight "is on the level"—is to "put out" their man somehow, as quickly as possible, and to collect their end of the purse as promptly as possible. I have seen my quota of fights in my life time, but never one in which claims of "fouls" were not made.

Is it not logical to suppose that leading exponents of their art should be able to give a demonstration of it without resorting to foul means?

Although I have given "physical culture lessons"

of a certain kind I have but little knowledge of how boxing lessons are conducted in academies and reputable gymnasiums. The popularity of this branch of athletics indicates that the lessons are conducive to corporal perfection, and teach men how to use their strength to best advantage when driven to the point of defense.

This principle is not observed by "scrappers." They pay less, if any attention to boxing than to learning tricks of their trade. It is all very well for sporting writers to speak about Fitzsimmons' and Sullivan's art, but I am quite sure that one or more efficient tricks is the real mainspring of many pugilistic reputations.

The rules of the prize ring are fair and formed to protect men from foul methods. For that very reason, all the tricks learned—and they are many and efficient—are, if not absolutely fouls, so near the dividing line that the margin of distinction is almost nil.

Through the press of the country we are informed that prizefighters now-a-days make considerable fortunes. Then they did not, and having a surprisingly healthy appetite in a healthy body, the fighting profession sadly delayed the perfect development of my *embonpoint*.

LIVING BY MY WITS.

CHAPTER V.

LIVING BY MY WITS.

TRUE, my fights with Tommy Gibbons and others had brought me some money, but the social obligations were so many and the celebrations so frequent that, after a short time of plenty, I always found myself "dead broke" and compelled to resort to my "wits" for making a living.

All Chatham street—now Park Row—and the Bowery teemed with "sporting houses," which offered opportunities to men of my class. In many of these places boxing was the real or pretended attraction.

On an elevated stage from three to six pairs of boxers and wrestlers furnished nightly entertainment for a roomful of foolish men, and—more's the pity!—women. The real purpose of these gatherings must remain nameless here, but this fact we must note, that all of these "sporting-houses," these hells of blackest iniquity, were run by so-called statesmen, patriots, politicians, many of them lawmakers, or else by their figureheads.

The figureheads were chosen with great carefulness. To become a proxy owner of a "sporting-house" one had to have a reputation, sufficient to attract that particularly silly and morbid crowd of habitues. Some of the reputations were made in the prize ring, viz: Frank White, manager of the Champion's Rest, on the Bowery, two doors north of Houston street; Billy Madden, Mike Cleary and other "prominent" prizefighters. A few of them, as Billy Madden and Frank Stevenson, later branched out as backers of pugilists, policy shops and gambling houses.

Reputations made in prisons were also accepted as qualifications, and "Fatty" Flynn, Billy McGlory, Tommy Stevenson, Jimmy Nugent, of Manhattan Bank robbery fame, and other ex-inmates of jails owed their wide popularity and money-making capacity to their terms spent behind the bars.

An isolated position of especially luminous glamor was acceptably filled by the famous Mr. Steve Brodie, the bridge-jumper, and greatest "fake" and fraud of the period.

In places where boxing was not the attraction, the vilest passions of human nature were vainly incited by painted sirens, who, by experience and compulsion of their employers, had become perfect in their shrewd wickedness. In front of these "joints"—

frequently called "bilking houses"—glaring posters, picturing the pleasures within, were displayed in most garish array.

In addition to these places described, a number of dance-halls, notably Billy McGlory's Armory Hall, and "Fatty" Flynn's place in Bond street, completed the boast of the day that New York City was a "wide-open town," and the "only place in the world fit to live in."

It was not very difficult for one, accustomed to the environment, to "make a living" in it by his "wits."

Any one, not minding a short spell of strenuousness, could always get from a dollar and a half to two dollars for "donning the mitts" in the "sporting-houses," where boxing was the special feature. Others, having neither the training or inclinations to take part in these "set-to's," officiated as waiters —"beer-slingers"—and found it more remunerative, if more tedious work.

It seems to be a distinct trait of people who visit these "dives" and "joints" to leave their small allowance of intelligence at the door. Men, who, in their daily occupation, are fairly alert and awake to their interests, permit themselves to be cheated by the most transparent devices of the "beer-slingers."

To give these fellows a bill in payment of drinks

is simply inviting them to experiment on you. Over charging, "palming"—retaining a coin in the palm of the hand between ball of thumb and fleshy part—"flim-flamming"—doubling a bill in a number of them, and counting each end of it as one separate bill—are the most common means of cheating employed. Whenever any of these tricks failed, the money was either withheld or taken away by force, and the victim—the "sucker"—bodily thrown into the streets as a "disorderly person."

Such were the glories of the "open town."

Although a recognized factor in the world pugilistic, I was not above seeking occasional employment in these resorts, and it helped me to create for myself another reputation. I did not work in these places for the purpose of study or observation, yet, every night my contempt for the patrons of these "joints" increased.

Men, whose names I had heard and mentioned with awe; men, whose positions and station should have been guarantees of every sterling quality, came there, not once, but night after night, to enjoy that seemingly harmless pastime known as "slumming"—to have a "good time."

A "good time" in the midst of moral and physical filth; a "good time" in the company of jailbirds, fallen men and women; a "good time" of grossest sel-

fishness, for, over and over again, I have seen men there for whose education I would have gladly given years of my life, and who, by one word of sympathy or encouragement, could have rekindled the dying flame of hope, of self-respect, in some fellow-being, but that word was never spoken, because it would have brought discord into the "good time," and would have jangled the croaking melody chanted by that chorus of human scum in praise of their host—the "sightseer"—of the evening!

A glorious sport this "sightseeing," these "good times," when men of "respectability" and position feast with gloating eyes on all that is vile and look on the unfortunates of a great city as if they were some strange beasts, some freaks in human shape. That almost every creature in these "dives" and "joints" has left behind a niche in the world's usefulness, or a home, to which his or her daily thoughts stray back, is not considered by the "sightseer." One does not like unpleasant reflections when at a circus.

Vile, very vile, are the men and women who constitute the population of divedom, but how about the representatives of respectability, who come among them to spend their "good time" with them?

Were I at liberty to give the names of men whom I have seen hobnobbing with the most fearful riff-

raff, you would shrug your shoulders and say: "I cannot believe it of them." Yet, I do not lie.

There is no need for lying, and there is much corroboration, not the least being the conscience of those men.

We want you—you men and women of respectability—to come to these "dives," but we want you to come for another purpose. Even at this very moment there is a scope for your efforts in spite of all change of administration and christian endeavor has done for that part of the city. The stamping out of vice is carried on vigorously, but vice is a proverbially obstinate disease.

Only a few nights ago I saw a scene in a widely known pest hole, reeking with stench beyond its very doors, which I can only hint at in describing it.

At one of the tables sat a youth, a mere boy, who had been coaxed into the dirty hole by the persuasion of the wily "barker" at the side door. The boy seemed from the country, his ruddy complexion and "store clothes" indicated it. The drink, which he had been forced to buy, was standing untasted before him. Without being afraid, he kept wide awake and resented all overtures made to him. But he looked too much like an easy victim to escape the usual procedure.

Before he was aware of it, a woman had dropped into the chair on the other side of the table. At least more than fifty years of age, the toothless wretch assumed the coquetry of a young girl.

The gray hair, devoid of comb or ribbon, hung in straggling strands to her shoulders. The front of her dress was unbuttoned. Still, this witch of lowest depravity, lulled her Lorelei song, hoping to transfix the gaze of the boy—young enough perhaps to be her grandson—by the leer of her bleary eyes.

I do not dare, and if I dared, could not tell you the horridness of this scene, yet it was only a detail in the grander spectacle, the "good time," seen and enjoyed nightly by thousands of the "better" class.

Forerunners of the eventually coming overthrow of "open" vice made themselves felt during some of the more important elections and for a few weeks preceding election day the ukase was sent out by the mysterious hidden powers: "Lie low for a while."

These periods of restriction, while not welcome, did not involve great hardships for us, the "sports" of the Bowery. If the blare of the wheezy cornet and the thumping of the piano had to be silenced for the time being, there were other channels in

which the services of the men, who did not care, could be utilized.

One of the most flourishing industries carried on was the confidence game in its many guises.

"Ah, all the 'easy marks' go up to the Tenderloin now," is the cry of the few remaining Bowery grafters. Then it was different.

The Bowery was famed from Atlantic to Pacific for what it offered. Every day a new consignment of lambs unloaded itself on this highway of the foolish and miserable, to be devoured by the expectant wolves. The recognized headquarters of the wolves was at the corner of Pell street.

A few among them were men of some education and refinement, but the most of them were beetle-browed ruffians, who seemed ill at ease in their fine raiment, the emblem of their calling.

To get the stranger's money many means were used.

Sailors, immigrants, farmers and out-of-town merchants were approached in most suitable manner, generally by a claim of former acquaintanceship. To celebrate the renewal of their old friendship it was necessary to adjoin to the nearby gin-mill. Here, the stranger, the "refound old friend," would not be permitted to spend one cent of his money—"dear, no, you're my guest."

Next move: The two reunited friends—the wolf and the lamb—are joined by a third—"an old friend o' mine," says the wolf.

The newcomer sings one of the many variations of the old, old theme. He has just won a lot of money at a game where no one can lose; or has a telegram promising beyond a doubt that a certain horse was to win that day; or has a hundred dollar bill, which he wants to change; or is broke, and offers his entire outlay of jewelry, watch, studs and rings, each one flashing with fire-spitting jewels, for a mere bagatelle of fifty dollars; or offers to bet on some mechanical trick toy in his possession, trick pocketbook or snuff box, and loses every bet to the wolf—but not to the lamb; or offers to take both, wolf and lamb, to a "regular hot joint," hinting at the beautiful sights to be beheld there, which, in reality, is a "never-lose" gambling device.

Should the lamb prove impervious to all these temptations, the pleasing concoction called "knock-out drops" is introduced as most effective tonic.

Sometimes there is a slip in the proceedings, and the lamb "tumbles to the game" before he is shorn. This is entirely against the rules of the industry, and cannot be permitted without being rebuked. Therefore, the confidence industry was always willing to

draw its apprentices from the class in which muscularity and brutality were the only qualifications.

Other industries, now much retrograded, were the "sawdust," "green goods" and "gold brick" games. All these games were vastly entertaining to all, and vastly profitable to some. Besides, in their lower stages, and technically inside of the law, they gave employment to many young men, who, like me, were unwilling to use their strength in more honorable occupation, preferring to be the slaves of crooked masters and schemes.

Those were not all the ways in which a well-known tough could earn an honest dollar. To our "hang out," sheltering always a large number of choice spirits, frequently came messengers calling for a quota for some expedient mission. We were the "landsknechts" of the day, willing to serve any master, without inquiring into the ethics of the cause, for pay.

Electoral campaigns in this and other cities furnished much employment. Capt B——, of Hoboken, a notorious "guerrilla" chief, was a frequent employer. During a heated contest in a small town near Baltimore, he shipped fifty of us to the scene of strife to "help elect" his patron. Five "Bowery gents," in rough and ready trim, were stationed near each doubtful polling place, and, somehow, in-

duced voters, unfriendly to their master of the moment, to keep away from the ballot boxes.

Local primaries and conventions, regardless of politics, could never afford to do without us. To-day we would fight the men, who, to-morrow, would pay us to turn the tables on our masters of yesterday.

Still, we were loyal to our temporary bosses. We offered our strength and brutality in open market. We asked a price, and, if it was paid, we did our "work" with a faithfulness worthier of a better cause. That this was so is proven by the fact that not only John Y. McKane, the "Czar of Coney Island," recruited his police force from among us, but even reputable concerns, like the Iron Steamboat Company, and others, engaged men of our class to preserve order and peace at designated posts.

A number of railroad companies and detective bureaus, in times of strikes, invited us to aid them in protecting property and temporary employees, but, for some reason or other, these offers were never greedily accepted.

Among the rest of these unlisted occupations must be mentioned playing pool and cards. I do not mean the out-and-out experts of these games hung around to win money from unwary strangers. Quite a number of the more "straight" saloons on

the Bowery did not object to having about the place a crowd of fellows who were fair players of pool or the games of cards in vogue. If, by any chance they lost a game, the proprietor would stand the loss, and, if they proved exceedingly lucky, he would give them a percentage of the receipts of the game.

It is rather difficult to enumerate all the different ways in which a man, who had to live by his "wits," could make a living on the Bowery. They were many and variegated in their nature. It was a saying of the day that all a man had to do then was to leave his "hang-out" for an hour to return with enough money to pay his expenses for the day.

AT THE SIGN OF CHICORY HALL.

CHAPTER VI.

AT THE SIGN OF CHICORY HALL.

I HAVE several times mentioned "hang-out." Most of these "hang-outs" were ginmills (saloons) of the better class, but the real Bowery Bohemian chose odd spots for his haunts. The most unique resort in this Bohemia of the nether world was at Chicory Hall, where my particular gang had established itself.

It was a basement at the corner of Fourth street and Bowery. Originally a bakeshop, it had been unoccupied for some time, until a coffee merchant rented it to prepare his chicory there. One man constituted the entire working force of the plant, and it so happened that Tom Noseley, the chicory baker, was imbued with sporting proclivities.

Do not let us forget that, at the time, the prize-fighter was a man of consequence to the youths of the East Side. To know a pugilist, to have spoken to him, to have shaken his hand, was an event never to be forgotten.

Tom Noseley was a very young man. In the immediate neighborhood of his basement were many "sporting-houses." Tom Noseley was earning eighteen dollars a week. What is more natural than that one of sporting proclivities should become an enthusiastic patron of "sporting-houses"?

Tom Noseley wanted to number some well-known pugilists among his acquaintances. Several well-known pugilists, I among the number, did not resent his many invitations to drink with him, and, ere long, the dream of Noseley seemed fully realized, for we consented, after much coaxing, to call at his basement for the pleasant task of "rushing the growler."

Our first call at the cellar convinced us of its many attractions. It seemed just the place for an ideal "hang-out." Then, also, there was Tom Noseley's weekly stipend of eighteen dollars a week, which he was willing to spend to the last cent for the "furthering of sport."

Tom Noseley was a hunter of Bowery lions. I have been told that in higher social strata different lions are hunted by different hunters. Still, the species do not differ very much from each other.

Men who had "done" a long term in prison; men who had a reputation for crookedness; men who were known to make their living without having to

descend to the ignoble manner of working for it, all these had been fads of Noseley. Then, the sporting spirit of the Bowery flared up with great spluttering, and Noseley, for the nonce, took the poor, shiftless boxers to his heart of hearts.

We named the cellar "Chicory Hall," and quickly succeeded in making it known.

The cellar consisted of two large rooms. Descending from Fourth street, about a dozen steps led to the bakeshop. Four small windows, grimed with impenetrable dirt, suggested the presence of light. The sunlight or cloudy sky found no token there. At night one dim flame of gas gave a sort of humorous weirdness to the filthy hole.

Adjoining the bakeshop was a dark apartment of the same size as the first room, used as storing place for the bags of bran, which were used in the manufactory of chicory. Shortly after establishing our headquarters at Chicory Hall, we chose the storage room as our sleeping chamber, making unwieldy couches from the heavy, unclean bags.

Certainly we had conveniences, a "front room" and a "bedroom," what more could we desire? And we appreciated it. Did not I, myself, spend ten entire days and nights in Chicory Hall without ever leaving it?

But while Tom Noseley's eighteen dollars a week,

earned by his intermittent labors in baking chicory, were not to be despised as the substantial nucleus of our treasury, they were not enough to provide a little food and much drink for about six able-bodied prizefighters out of work. The regular staff included Jerry Slattery, the Limerick Terror; Mike Ryan, the Montana Giant; Tom Green and his brother, Patsy Green; Charlie Carroll and myself.

On Saturday, Tom Noseley's pay day, two or three of the staff appointed themselves a committee to accompany our host to the office and to prevent him from falling into other hands. His return was celebrated by feasting on many pounds of raw chopped meat and drinking many gallons of beer. Sunday morning found the exchequer very much depleted, containing, perhaps, just enough to reflicker our drooping and aching spirits by purchasing several pints of the vilest fusel oil, parading under the name of whiskey, ever manufactured.

Sabbath day, the day of rest, as appointed by the Master, was spent by us in quiet peace. That the peace was a consequence of the turbulent hilarity of the night before, and not a desire to live according to divine dictates is a mere detail.

At the beginning of our sojourn at Chicory Hall our feast of Saturday was generally followed by a famine until the next week's end. This was some-

what palliated by a happy inspiration of "Lamby," a character of the locality.

"Lamby"—no one knew him by any other name—had some mysterious hiding and sleeping place, but was infatuated with our Subterranean Bohemia and spent all his spare time—which practically was all his time, excepting the hours dedicated to sleep—with the Knights of Chicory Hall. He was a boy of about seventeen years of age, over six foot tall, of piping voice and full of most unexpected opinions and ideas.

There was good stuff in "Lamby," as in many of the East Side boys, who are, by environment and circumstances, led into evil, or, at least, useless lives. "Lamby's" heart was bigger than all his carcass. To be his friend, meant that "Lamby" thought it his duty to give three-fourths of all his temporary possessions to the cementing of this friendship.

I made "Lamby's" acquaintance under inconvenient conditions. He was not yet entitled to vote. This did not prevent him from formulating the strongest opinions on political personages and principles. During the election which made me acquainted with him, "Lamby" for some unknown reason, was doing the most enthusiastic individual "stumping" for the candidate of one of the labor parties. It was conceded by the supporters of the

labor ticket that the candidate in question stood absolutely no chance of being elected and that their entire list of nominees was only in the field as a means of making propaganda, of paving the way for future possibilities. All this did not deter "Lamby" from sounding the labor-man's praises on all and every occasion.

In one of his many eulogies "Lamby" was opposed by a ward-heeler of the local organization, who laughing offered to bet any amount that the much praised candidate would not poll fifty votes. This roused the ire of the champion of labor.

"Say," cried "Lamby" at his adversary, "you know I ain't got no money to bet and that's why you're so anxious to bet me. If you're on the level in this, I'll tell you what I'll do. You put up your money and if Kaltwasser don't get elected I won't speak to no human being for a month."

The politician accepted this odd bet and, a few weeks later, "Lamby," by his own decree, found himself sentenced to one month's silence.

And "Lamby" loved to talk!

It was a fearful dilemma, but leave it to a Bowery boy to wriggle out of a scrape.

In one of his rambles, "Lamby" had met Rags, and, impressed by some similarity in their appear-

ance and disposition, had appointed him forthwith his chum and inseparable companion.

Rags was a cur of nondescript origin and breed. His long, wobbly and ungainly legs barely balanced a long and shaggy body, draped with a frowsy, kaleidoscopic mass of wiry hair. The color of Rags' eyes could not be determined, bangs of matted locks wholly screening them from view.

For some obscure reason, "Lamby" conceived the idea that the use of the lower extremities would prove injurious to Rags, and the mongrel—surely weighing at least fifty pounds—spent most of his time in the loving arms of his adoring friend.

The opportunity to return some of his friend's devotion, by making himself useful to him, came to Rags during the period in which "Lamby's" tongue was restrained from its favorite function for a month of silence. "Lamby's" pledge not to speak to a human being for a month was never broken, but he found a way of expressing himself to Rags in such loud and distinct tones that no one had any difficulty in following the train of conversation.

There was so much ingenuity in the plan that the ward politician declared the bet off and presented "Lamby" with a part of the stake money.

On a Monday, when the feast of Saturday was but

a sweet memory and the famine of the week had set in with convincing force, Tom Noseley and his staff of friends—including "Lamby" and Rags, who hugged the shadowy recess of a corner—sat disconsolately in the dingy dimness of Chicory Hall.

"Ain't none of you fellows got any money at all?" queried Jerry Slattery against hope.

The question was too absurd to deserve an answer.

"Well, what are we going to do?" pursued the Limerick Terror; "I'm hungry as blazes and can't stand this any longer. Nothing to eat and nothing to drink; this is worse than being on the bum in the country among the hayseeds. If I don't get something here pretty soon, I'll go out into the Bowery and see if I can't pick up something."

The harangue passed our ears without comment. More deep and dark silence. Then everybody turned to where "Lamby's" preambling cough heralded a monologistic dialogue.

"Rags," began the silent sage of Chicory Hall, "what would you and me do, if we was hungry and wasn't as delicate as we are? Wouldn't you and me go up to Lafayette alley and look them chickens over that don't seem to belong to nobody? Couldn't you and me use them in the shape of one o' them nice chicken stews with plenty of potatoes and onions in it? Ain't it too bad that you and me

is too delicate to be chasing round after them chickens and that we aren't allowed to speak so's we could tell other people how to get a meal that'll tickle them to death?"

Bully "Lamby."

In less than five minutes a small, but determined gang of marauders made their stealthy way through Lafayette alley. Every one of the husky pilferers endeavored to shrink his big body into the smallest compass. The alley ended in a hamlet of ramshackle stables in the rear of a famous bathing establishment. The place was deserted in day time as all men and animal occupants were in the streets pursuing the energetic calling of peddling. As said, the place was deserted, save for those chickens. Dating from our first call, the chickens, young and old, began to disappear.

For over a week we feasted on chicken. We had them in all known styles of cooking. Our bill of fare included fried, baked, stewed, broiled and fricasseed chicken. But a day came when naught was left of the flock of chicks excepting one big, black rooster.

I shall never forget him, because it was my fate to be his captor.

He surely was a general of no mean order. We had often hunted him, but he had always succeeded

in eluding us by some cleverly executed movement.

This survivor of his race irritated my determination and, supported and flanked by my cohorts, I set out to exterminate the last of the clan. Sounding his defy in many cackles and muffled crows the black hero raced up and down the yard, dodging, whenever possible, under some of the unused wagons and trucks standing about. But escape was impossible.

Driven into a corner he faced me and my bag with splendid heroism. He met the lowering death-trap by an angry leap, and, when I and bag fell on top of him, we were greeted by a shower of furious picking and clawing.

Oh, brave descendant of a brave ancestry, nobly did you meet the inevitable fate! You were never born to be eaten; you were the tough son of a tough father! First, you fought right splendidly against being captured, then, you resisted most stubbornly against being devoured! Boiled, stewed, fried, hashed, you remained tough, and, even in death, you defied us! You escaped the destiny of your weaker brethren, for you were never eaten!

Chicken coops are not many on the Bowery. Having found and demolished the feathered oasis, we were again reduced to dire straits.

Again "Lamby" proved our rescuer.

He and Rags, with the story of the extraordinary bet, were discovered by a reporter and given due fame in the press. "Lamby" and Rags became celebrities and deigned to receive their many callers in the attractive reception room of Chicory Hall. A trifle of the glamor reflected on us, the minor characters in the comedy, and visitors became quite frequent to behold the "truly charming, typical Bohemia of the nether world."

But visitors will not call again unless you make their first visit entertaining. How could we entertain them? Not one of us was as yet of a literary turn of mind, and were not prepared to offer readings or selections from Shakespeare, Lowell or Browning. Some of us were quite renowned as comedians, but it is very doubtful if our humor would have appealed to the class of people honoring us with their visits. There was nothing left to do but to offer entertainment in the only line in which we all were proficient. The reception room of Chicory Hall became an impromptu arena and fights were fought down there which, for ferociousness and bloody stubbornness have never been beaten.

It would be quite logical to suppose here that our visitors were of the rowdy element, and all of the male sex. I wish I could tell you differently, but

the truth of the matter is that the "very best families" were represented at our nocturnal seances by younger members of both sexes.

In the course of time Chicory Hall became quite a "sight place," and it was nothing unusual to see a string of carriages and coaches in front of the humble entrance to the subterranean Bohemia. Would I were a Balzac to describe to you an evening at Chicory Hall.

At the foot of the stairs was a circle marked on the floor with chalk. No one save the regular members of the staff were permitted to enter the sacred precincts without depositing a "voluntary" contribution in the circle. Corresponding to the amount gathered by the circle was the degree of entertainment.

On a row of boxes, crippled chairs, upturned pails and other makeshift seats, the guests were served with drinks at their own expense pending the preliminaries. Above their heads, traced with white paint on grimy walls, was this legend in straggling letters:

"WELCOME TO CHICORY HALL!"

With our increasing prosperity came needed improvements, and the solitary gas light was reinforced by a murky smelling kerosene lamp, which I can

never remember having seen topped by an uncracked chimney. The door, on account of the lively proceedings within, had to be kept shut, and you can easily imagine the atmosphere in the cellar, there being no ventilation.

Still our guests kept coming and truly enjoyed themselves because "it was all so charmingly realistic and odd."

Being the most steady member of Chicory and rarely absent from the hall, it was quite natural that I took part in most of the "goes" in the cellar. I felt myself in my element. Neither the Marquis of Queensberry or the London prize ring rules were rigidly enforced, and my viciousness had full scope, our guests—men and women of the "better" class—liking nothing so well as a "knockout finish."

Mainly through my savageness the last vestige of regulated fighting disappeared from our "set-tos," and our performances fell to the level of "go-as-you-please" scrimmages. My reputation as a precious brute increased rapidly, and again a certain set of men saw a probability in me.

I was asked if I would fight anything and anybody under any conditions. An easy question to answer for a man, who, in the fullest possession of all his strength, had no knowledge of any other controlling influence than his brutal instinct.

Not knowing or caring who my opponent was to be, I left all arrangements to the enthusiasts, and in due time was introduced to Mr. Mickey Davis, who had the great honor of being the champion rough and tumble fighter of New York.

These were the conditions of our meeting: We were to be locked in a room, with the privilege of using any means of defeating each other. Of course, weapons were excluded, but any other pleasantries like biting, clawing, choking, gouging, were not only allowed, but really essential. He who first begged to have the door unlocked and to be taken from the room was the loser.

I held the championship for some time. In fact, I relinquished it voluntarily not long afterward on account of several changes which occurred in my life.

I should not blame you in the least were you to feel disgust and contempt for me for writing of it and for seemingly to glory in it. Your disgust is justified, your contempt is not. I myself am disgusted with my past and its several stages of degradation, but I have pledged myself to tell you the truth, and I am doing and will do it.

Perhaps you may despise me for it, but put yourself in my place and you will be less severe. There was something brewing and fermenting within me

which wanted to assert itself. I wanted to be somebody; to be successful. It is a frank confession.

Will you blame a blind man for choosing the wrong path at the crossroads? Will you not, instead, lead him in the right direction?

Was I not blind when I stood on life's highway and could not see the pointed finger which read: "To Decency, Usefulness and Manhood"?

And there was no one to lead me.

Yes, criticise, sneer, if you will, but do not forget that in my life there had been no parental love or guidance and no moral influence.

The attaining of my championship revived the interest of the "sporting set" of the Bowery in me, and several flattering offers were made to me by certain dive-keepers. I changed from place to place and left such a trail of noble deeds behind me that ere long I found myself a real, genuine celebrity and a man with a name.

I never had any difficulty in getting work at my calling—that of a "bouncer," called, for the sake of politeness, "floor manager," as my connection with any place meant additional customers. I was splendidly equipped for the position, and my fame kept steadily increasing until I thought myself on the sure road to success.

I reasoned the case with myself and drew the fol-

lowing deductions: I was feared because of my brutality; I was respected because of my "squareness," which had never been severely tempted; I had more money than ever before; I was wearing well-made, if flashy, clothes; the grumbling envy of my less fortunate fellows and chums sang like a sweet refrain in my ears; I was strong, vicious and healthy. Why, why shouldn't I consider myself successful?

MY GOOD OLD PAL.

CHAPTER VII.

MY GOOD OLD PAL.

HERE we have reached a stage in my story where I must introduce to you the dearest friend of all, my good old pal, my Bill.

Bill is only a dog, but when the doors of my past banged shut behind me he was the only one able to squeeze through them into my better life. He is the only relic of my other days and a living witness of remembrance.

And, who can tell, but he, too, may have gone through a transformation, if that was necessary in his case. He was always faithful, true and loyal, and what would you think of me were I to repudiate him now?

Those who know me do believe and you will believe that I have not the shadow of desire to detract one iota from the work accomplished by my little martyr, but I would be grossly unjust were I to deprive Bill of the credit due him for his share in the making of me.

I am a man; I feel it. My soul and conscience tell me so, and to all the forces and factors that combined in my transformation I owe a debt of gratitude which deeds only—not words—can repay. If this mentioning of Bill shall demonstrate to you that he was of importance in my regeneration, then I shall have paid part of my debt to him.

Not very long ago the rector of a fashionable church in New York City came forward with the blunt claim that dogs have more than intelligence; that they have souls. Of course, this assertion caused a storm of indignation and a flood of discussion in many circles. Dogs were rated very low after that in the list of intellectual values by the representatives of those circles.

It is fortunate that I am not sufficiently learned or educated to have an authoritative or deciding voice in the matter, for it will save me from criticism when I become too enthusiastic about my good dumb, soulless brute.

Yet, I wish, pray and hope that he has a soul.

* * * * * * *

Between First and Houston street, on the Bowery, was a saloon which was known throughout the land as the "hang-out" of the most notorious toughs and crooks in the country. Still, the place was nightly visited by persons called "ladies and gentlemen,"

representatives, specimens, of the "best" classes of society.

I was employed there as "bouncer." My nightly duty was to suppress trouble of any kind and at all hazards.

The business staff of my employer included a number of gentlemen who were renowned for their deftness of touch, and who, at various and frequent times, had had their photographs taken free of charge at a certain sombre-looking building in Mulberry street.

Their code of ethics—never adopted by the public at large—was most elastic. Still, there were times when they did overreach the limits of Bowery etiquette and then it became my painful duty to rise in righteous indignation and smite them into seeing the error of their ways.

One night a middle-aged man of respectable appearance, evidently the host of a party of "sightseers," got into a quarrel with a member of the mentioned gentry. There was a rumpus of sufficient volume to distract the attention of the other patrons from their most important duty, that of spending their money, and I was forced to take a hand in it.

I quickly ascertained that the "sightseer" and his friends were lavish "spenders," and, with a great display of dramatic effect, I ejected the loafer, who

had already become decidedly threatening. That, a few minutes later he found his way back again via the little, ever-handy side door, was a fact not made public.

My stylish "sightseer" had been somewhat sobered by the occurrence and was most effusive in thanking me for having so gallantly rescued him. A lingering sense of shame and realization of his position made him turn homeward, but before leaving he insisted that I should call at his home on the following day to be properly rewarded for having prevented him from falling further into the contumely of contempt.

Greed was then one of my many besetting sins, and without losing any time I called at the address given to me. It was a rather pretentious dwelling in one of New York's thoroughfares of ease and good living, and I could not help speculating on the moral make-up of a man who could leave this abode of comfort and home cheer behind to spend his leisure hours in a "good time" at a Bowery dive. Even though I could not read or write at that time, and was not sensible to the world's finer motives, such an act on the part of a man who had all that life could give, seemed to be beyond the ken of human intelligence and my humble understanding.

The reception accorded to me was none too cor-

dial. He seemed to regard me as a blackmailer, and, alas! he was very nearly correct in his estimate. After entreating me not to breathe a word to any living soul about his nightly adventure, he invited me to follow him to the stable in the rear of the house, where I was to receive the reward for my righteous conduct.

My hopes fell at this.

Stables are the lodging places of horses, and I began to wonder if he could imagine the consequences were I to attempt to lead a gift horse through the streets down to the Bowery. The police, if in nothing else, are very careful in looking after strayed horses and delight in finding, by accident, a pretended owner at the other end of the halter rope.

I mentioned all this to him, but he only laughed and bade me wait. He took me to a stall, and there pointed with pride at a litter of pure-bred bull pups who were taking a nap at the breast of their mother. He stooped and, one by one, lifted them up by the scruff of their necks for my inspection.

I felt disappointed, saw my dream of reward evaporate, and could not screw up any interest in the canine exhibition.

My aversion for all dogs dated from my years as newsboy in Park Row. One homeless little cur,

a mongrel looking for a bit of sympathy in his miserable existence, once made friendly overtures to me. I was still a brute—bestial, cruel—and sent the poor thing yelping with a kick. As soon as he had regained his footing he waited for his chance and then bit me in the leg.

Therefore I hated dogs, and reveled in the execution of my hatred.

I watched the pups with ill-concealed disgust. The little fat fellows hung limp and listless until dropped back into their nest. Just as I was priming myself to propose a compromise on a cash basis, a little rogue, different from his brothers, was elevated for examination. Instead of hanging quietly like the rest of the younger generation of the family, he twisted and wriggled, while his eyes, one of them becomingly framed in black, shone with play, appeal and good nature.

The shadow of a smile must have been on my lips, for the owner placed the pup in my arms and presented me with it.

My first impulse was to drop the pup and kick it back into the stall, but the little fellow seemed to consider his welcome as an understood thing, and with a sigh of content snuggled into the hollow of my arm. He was on my left side, and his warmth

BILL.

must have been infective, for I felt a peculiar if dull glow creep into my heart.

Without exactly knowing what I was doing, I tucked my new property under my coat and made my way to my room. It is a question whether the pup gained by the exchange of quarters. My room was on the top floor of an old-fashioned tenement. The ceiling was slanting and not able to cope efficiently with the rain. Of the original four panes of glass in the window, only two remained, paper having been substituted for the others. There was a cot, a three-legged chair, and a washstand with a cracked basin, and a pitcher.

I dropped the pup on the cot, and intended to note how he would take to his new surroundings. He failed to notice them. First, he squatted down and looked at me intently. I must have passed inspection, for, not seeing me draw closer, he came to the edge of the bed and gave a little whine. I meant to grab him by the neck and throw him to the floor, but when my hand touched him he felt so soft and warm, and—well, I patted him. Of course, I had no intention of allowing a pup to change the tenor of my life. That night I went to the saloon at the accustomed time and did my "duty" as well as before. However, at odd moments, I would think of the little fellow up in the room.

It had been our custom to spend the major part of the night drinking and carousing after the close of business. But on the morning succeeding the pup's arrival, I thought it best to go to my room at once, as he might have upset things or caused other damage. That is what I tried to make myself believe—a rather difficult feat in view of the pup's enormous bulk and ferocity—not caring to interpret my feelings. I opened the door of my attic room and peeped in. The little fellow was curled upon the blanket and did not wake until I stood beside him. Then he lifted his little nose, recognized me, and went off again into the land of canine dreams.

As I was burdened with the dog, I could not let him starve. Therefore, my neighbors had the wonderful, daily spectacle before them of seeing me, the champion rough and tumble fighter of the city, go to the grocery store on the corner and buy three cents' worth of milk and sundry other delicacies suitable to my room-mate. Had they taken it good-naturedly, I would have felt ashamed and the pup would have fared badly in his nursing, but my neighbors sneered and smiled at my unusual proceeding which did seem rather incongruous, and, mainly to spite them and give them a chance to break their amused silence, did I persist in playing my new

part, that of care-taker and nurse to his royal highness, the dog.

I became used to him, after a fashion, and, though showering very little affection on the pup, he seemed to be supremely happy in my company. We had been together for some time before I was sure of our relative positions. Always finding him asleep on my return from the saloon, I was surprised to hear him move about, one morning, as I was inserting the key in the lock. I opened the door, and before me danced the pup in a veritable frenzy of delight at beholding me. This not being a psychological essay, only a plain, true story, I shall not attempt to analyze, but will tell you straight facts in a straight way.

It was a new, a bewildering sensation to me to perceive a living being to be so pleased at my appearance. It was a new, a strange welcome, perhaps not entirely unselfish, because milk and good things to eat generally came with me, but, still, much purer and more sincere than the greeting "hello" or loud-mouthed invitation to drink vouchsafed me by ribald companions.

I had not yet softened, at least, did not realize it, or would not admit it, but in occasional, unobserved moments, a sporadic, spontaneous dropping of the hard outer shell would come to me and I would not deny it until my "manhood" whispered to

me: "Why, what is the matter with you? Are you not ashamed of giving way to your feelings? You are a man, a great, big, tough man, and not supposed to have any softer emotions. Get yourself together and be again a worthy member of your class!"

I must have been in one of these softer moods on the morning when the pup gave his first outspoken recognition. Why I did it, I do not know, but I lifted the little fellow to my arms and sat down on the bed. To us two a critical moment had come and it was best to make the most of it.

"Do you like me, pup?" I asked in all seriousness.

Bless me, if that little thing did not try to bark an emphatic "Yes!" Oh, it was no deep-toned growl or snarl. It was the pup's first effort in the barking line, and it sounded very much like a compound of whine and grunt. But I understood and we settled down to talk the matter over.

I realized that the pup was entitled to be named, and that matter was first in order.

"See here, pup; you and I are very plain and ordinary people, and it wouldn't do to give you a 'high-toned' name. Now, what do you say to 'Bill'?—just plain 'Bill'?"

The motion was speedily passed, and then Bill and I went to discuss other questions.

"Bill, you and I aren't overburdened with friends. If you and I were to die at the same moment, not even a cock or crow would croak a requiem for us. Now, I am going to make you a proposition. You're friendless, and so am I; you're ugly and so am I; you belong to the most unintelligent class of your kind and so do I; why not establish a partnership between us?"

Bill had sat, watching my lips and looking as wise as a sphinx, until I asked the question. He answered in the affirmative, without a moment's hesitation.

"I'm glad you like my proposition, Bill. Now you and I are going to live our own life, without regard for others. We're going to stick to each other, Bill; we're going to be loyal to each other, and, though we do not amount to much in the world, to each other we must be the best of our class. We're going to be true friends."

I took Bill's paw, and, there and then, we sealed the compact, which was never broken.

Our relationship being founded on this basis, I spent a good deal of my spare time in the room, which until Bill's arrival, had been nothing but my sleeping place. Soon the bare walls and the dilapidated condition of the furniture began to grate on me and, slowly, I improved our *home*. I bought a few pictures from a peddler, purchased

two plaster casts from an Italian, and even employed a glazier to put our window in good shape. Bill and I took pride in our home, and thought it the very acme of coziness. You see, neither one of us had ever known a real home.

But dogs, as well as men, need exercise, and, in the afternoon, attired in our best—Bill with his glittering collar, on which the proceeds of a whole night had been expended—we took our walk along the avenue. He was beautifully ugly, and the usual pleasant witticisms, such as, "Which is the dog?" were often inflicted upon us. But we didn't mind, being a well-established firm of partners, who could afford to overlook the comments of mere outsiders.

In the midst of our prosperity came an unexpected break. A reform wave swept over the city and closed most of the "resorts." The loss of my position left us in a badly crippled financial condition.

Bill and I had lived in a style befitting two celebrities. Porterhouse steaks, fine chops, and cutlets had been frequent items on our bills of fare. The drop was sudden and emphatic. Stews, fried liver, and hash took the place of the former substantial meals, and our constitutions did not thrive very well. It did not even stop at that, for, ere long, we were regular *habitués* of the free-lunch

counters. It often almost broke my heart to see my Bill, well bred and blooded, feed on the scraps thrown to him from a lunch counter. But there was a dog for you! Instead of turning his nose up at it, or eating it with growl and disgust, Bill would devour the pickled tripe or corned beef with a well-feigned relish. Between the mouthfuls his glance would seek mine and he would say, quite plainly: "Don't worry on my account. I'm getting along very nicely on sour tripe. In fact, it is a favorite dish of mine."

You poor, soulless Bill, of whom many men, with souls, could learn a lesson in grit and pluck!

During that spell of idleness our hours in the room were less cheerful than before. I must confess that my "blues" were inspired by material cares, and not by any regrets or self-reproaches; but, whatever the cause, they were sitting oppressively on me, and I often found myself in an atmosphere of the most ultra indigo. It did not take Bill very long to understand these moods, and, by right of his partnership, he took a hand in dispelling them.

He would place himself directly in front of me, and stare at me with unflinching gaze. Not noticing any effect of his hypnotic suggestions, he would go further, and place his paw on my knee,

with a little pleading whine. Having awakened my attention, he would put himself into proper oratorical pose and loosen the flood-gates of his rhetoric.

"Say, Kil, I gave you credit for more sense and courage. Here you are, sitting with your hands in your lap, and bemoaning a fate which is largely of your own making. Besides—excuse me for being so brutally frank—you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Big and strong, you live in idleness, and now you kick because you are down and out and deprived of your despicable means of livelihood. Owen Kildare, brace up and be a man. You are not friendless. I am here. True, I'm only a dog, a soulless brute, but I'm your Bill, and we're going to stick until we both win out!"

You will not offend me by calling me a silly fool for putting these words into Bill's mouth. Perhaps I err greatly in believing that Bill was not without influence over me, or that I could understand him; perhaps it was all imagination, but, if it was—and I doubt it—it was good, because, no matter what it may be, whether imagination, inspiration or aspiration, if it leads up and not down, it cannot be too highly appreciated.

There were times when Bill's speech was either less convincing or my period of blues more pro-

nounced than usual, and then he would resort to more drastic measures. He undertook to prove by the most vivid object lesson that a buoyancy of spirits is the first essential. Dogs, when gay and playful, run and romp. Bill made believe he was gay, and romped and raced and ran. If you will take note of the fact that the exact measurements of the room were fifteen by twelve feet, you can easily imagine the difficulties opposing Bill's exercise. Snorting and puffing, he would cavort about the narrow precincts, now running into a bedpost, now bumping against the shaky washstand. But he always accomplished his object, because, before his collapse from his exertions, he never failed to put me into a paroxysm of laughter. No "blues" could ever withstand Bill's method.

Still, he was but a brute—a poor, dumb brute.

KNIGHTS ERRANT.

CHAPTER VIII.

KNIGHTS ERRANT.

An episode, which occurred about this time, took me into latitudes and scenes never before dreamed of by me.

As near as I can figure it, the event happened in March, 1893. I admit that in view of the seriousness of the incident my indefiniteness seems strange, but it is typical of my class.

Since I have moved in different spheres I have often wondered at this and tried to explain it to myself. No other explanation seems to be at hand except that this disregard of dates, of time and place is a characteristic of the world Bohemian, whether on the Bowery or in the Tenderloin. Recently I had an illustration of this.

In preparing a story, treating of a certain phase of Bowery life for a newspaper, I bethought myself of a man, who had been closely connected with the very occurrence I intended to mention. I sent for him and he came to my house, willing to tell

me all he could remember. He recalled it all and graphically described every detail.

At last I asked him to tell me the year and month in which it had happened. That caused an immediate halt in the narrative and many minutes were spent in serious reflection. It was of no avail. We fixed the date of it to be in "about" such and such a year, and such and such a month, but it was impossible to accurately settle the year and month.

And this in view of the fact that the occurrence had been a cold-blooded murder, that my informant had been an eye-witness of it and had spent several months in the House of Detention.

Why others are so careless of dates I do not know and it is not to the point here, but I do know that in the life of the East Side, every existence is so crammed full of reality that even the most important occurrences are only of temporary moment. There, events are dated by events.

Ask a fellow of the Bowery when he had lost his father or mother, and he will very likely answer:

"Oh, about five or six years ago."

If you insist on a more precise answer, he will scratch his head, ponder for a while, and then: "Let's see! Yes, the old man died about two months after I came from the penitentiary on my last bit, and that was somewhere in 1891."

I was playing my now familiar rôle of bouncer at "Fatty Flynn's," an ex-convict, who was running a dance hall and dive at 34 Bond street. It was only a few doors from the Bowery and enjoyed a great vogue among the transient sightseers, traversing the Bowery in search of "good times."

On the night in question, two Princeton students, arrayed in yellow and black mufflers and wearing the insignia of their fraternity, visited the dance hall in the course of their lark. It was rather early for that sort of thing, the place was half-empty, and I, to do the honors of the establishment and also to speed their "buying," stepped over to the two young men for a "jollying" chat.

They were very young, had a considerable amount of money, and seemed flattered by my mark of distinction.

We spoke about "sporting" life in general and they asked me concerning several dives which were the most notorious of the day. As I had worked in every dive of notoriety, it was not a difficult matter for me to give all desired information. This seemed to invite their hunger for knowledge and they invited me to make the third in their party and to spend the night in going from dive to dive. This, by the way, this unofficial guide-business is another

way in which the man, who has to live by his wits, turns many an "honest" dollar.

I could not accept the invitation as they held out no financial inducement and, that not forthcoming, I felt myself in duty bound to stick to my post and employer. However, it was a rainy night, business was slow and my chances for making any "extra" money very slim, and I entrusted one of my favorite waiters with the diplomatic mission of "boosting my game" with the two students. Moved by their curiosity and the skillful strategy of my emissary they made me an offer which was far more than I had expected, but which was nevertheless declined by me, until my persistent refusal to utilize my services in their behalf screwed their bid up to a figure, which I could not conscientiously decline.

I made my excuses to "Fatty" Flynn, and, that done, we started out on our expedition of studying social conditions and evil. Measured by dive time-standards, we had started out too early. It was only nine o'clock and the "fun" in the dives hardly ever began before midnight. Still, thanks to my knowing guidance, we found quite a number of dance halls where we could spend the intervening hours to the profit of the respective proprietors.

One thing, which soon disgusted me with my two charges, was that they were unable to stand

much drink. I warned them against too much indulgence, as that would incapacitate them for the pleasures to come, but youth is proverbially obstinate and they went their whooping way rejoicing.

After having left the "Golden Horn," a well-known dance hall in East Thirteenth street, we walked down Third avenue as far as Twelfth street, where they insisted on going into a gin-mill, which shed its garish radiance across our path. It was not a regulation dive and only known as the rendezvous of a gang of tough fellows, who made that part of the thoroughfare none too safe for passing strangers. From this it should not be supposed that they were unkempt in appearance. Quite the reverse, they were rather well-dressed.

We happened to drop into the place at a most inopportune moment. A crowd of these fellows were at the bar spending lavishly the proceeds of some successfully worked "trick." They were very hilarious; so were my protégés, and I was kept constantly on the alert to prevent friction between the hilarious majority and minority. It was not my policy to become embroiled in any useless rows and I entreated the students to continue on our way downtown. But they were not in a condition to listen to reasoning and, attracted by several unclean

stories told by members of the other faction, began to treat the "house" and intermingle with them.

There seemed to be no immediate prospect of any disturbance, and I permitted myself to leave the room for a few minutes. On my return the scene had completely changed. The crowd had closed around the students and were threatening them. I learned afterward that one of the students had taken umbrage at the rough familiarity of one of the gang and had attempted to hit him. The situation seemed critical, but not dangerous, and I was about to smooth matters, when my eye caught the reflection of some suspiciously glittering object. It was a knife in the hand of the tough offended and only partly concealed by the sleeve of the coat.

He was sneaking around the crowd to get beside his intended prey and had almost reached him when I decided to interfere. I had not measured my distance well, for just as I jumped between the two men, the knife was on its downward path and found the fulfillment of its mission in my neck.

A three-inch cut, a tenth part of an inch from the jugular vein, is not exactly the sort of souvenir one cares to take with him from an evening dedicated to "fun" and "good times." And when it confines one to the hospital for several weeks, it becomes a decided bore. All this was recognized

by my new found friend, the student, who had been the indirect cause of my disfigurement, and having in the meantime, been expelled from his college for some wild escapade, he decided to show his gratitude to me, for what he was pleased to call "having saved his life," by taking me abroad.

"You are not educated. Travel is the greatest educator, therefore, I will show you the world."

It did not require much coaxing to accept the proposition, and after arranging for a boarding-place for my good, old Bill, we started out to see the world.

The next six months were and are like a dream to me. I was perfectly willing to have the world shown to me, but am inclined to believe that I had a rather imperfect demonstrator. To be quite candid, I doubted if my fellow-traveler was any more familiar with the world at large than I was.

At any rate, after a hurried and zig-zagged jaunt through Europe, we landed in Algiers with a fearfully shrunken cost capital. The cafés of that African Paris certainly broadened my education.

An expected remittance from home failed to arrive and my partner fell into a trance of deep and pondering thought. The conclusion of it was that we, by decree of my "college chum," were forthwith appointed adventurers, soldiers of fortunes,

dare-devils and anything else that could make us believe our miserable, stranded condition was the stepping stone to great, chivalrous deeds to come. We enlisted in the Legion of Strangers.

But chivalry loses half of its charm when it comes in red trousers, blue jacket and on the back of a bony Rosinante, carrying you through stretches and stretches of glowing, burning sand. In short, the life of an African trooper, banished into the interior and subsisting on food as foreign to a Bowery stomach as the jargon spoken by his messmates, had absolutely no charm for me.

I am not very good at disguising my moods and emotions, and that I was homesick, that my heart, in spite of the excitement of the occasional skirmishes, yearned for my old Bowery, became apparent to my brother in misery. Then, a stranger coincidence, it also cropped out that my partner would much prefer to be on Broadway or Fifth avenue than in the dreary stockade of Degh-del-ker.

Alas, then, the railroad system of that part of Africa was hardly in existence, and even if it had been, it would not have been advisable for us to take berths of civilization, as the government foolishly wanted to retain our valuable service. History informs me that, shortly after our departure the garrison of Degh-del-ker had several disastrous en-

counters with some of the rebellious tribes, which would have probably resulted differently had we two lent our arms and strength to the cause of the tri-colored flag.

I mention this merely for the purpose of explaining the delicacy with which I have related this experience. Neither my friend nor myself have the slightest intention of becoming the unfortunate causes for international complications between our own country and France, for having bereft the latter of two such valiant warriors as ourselves.

We of the Bowery love colors and I had often had a potent wish that I could show myself in all the glory of my gaudy raiment to the gang of my old, beloved street. A Bowery boy in blue coat and red trousers, with clanking sabre by his side, I would have made the hit of my life if appearing thus attired in my favorite haunts. However, this pleasure was denied to me.

We managed to procure less stunning costumes and successfully besting the sentinels, started on our march for the coast.

It was a fearful trip. For six long weeks we plodded on through blinding sand and blistering heat, carefully avoiding all native villages and, yet, often saved from perishing just in the nick of time

by tribesmen, who found us in helpless state in hiding places.

From the coast we shovelled our way across the Mediterranean in the boiler-room of the good ship St. Heléne. It was suffocating work, and time and again, we were hauled up from the regions of below, thrown on the deck, and revived by streams of cold water.

At last, we steamed into the harbor of Marseilles, where we expected to find a letter of credit. It was there and we both fell on our knees in the most sincere thanksgiving ever offered.

Nothing more can be told in relation to this episode, excepting that we both felt we had been sufficiently educated by seeing the world and that we were urgently needed at home.

We lost no time in getting there.

A PLAYER OF MANY PARTS.

CHAPTER IX.

A PLAYER OF MANY PARTS.

You will easily believe me when I tell you that my very first task on coming home was to look up my good, old pal, my Bill.

His temporary home was a stable. The owner of it was an old acquaintance of mine and I was satisfied that Bill had been well treated during my absence. But how I had longed for him!

In Europe and Africa I had seen dogs of purest breed and best pedigree, but, to me, they were only as mongrels when compared to my Bill, my loyal boy. There had not been a day in our travels, when I had not asked myself the question: "I wonder what Bill is doing just now?"

And here I was home and rushing up to meet my pal.

The owner of the stable met me at the door and congratulated me on my safe return. Then he grew serious and began: "See, here, Kil, whatever we could do for Bill, we did, but there's something

the matter with him. He's off his feed and not half the lively dog he used to be."

I did not wait to hear any more, but went to look for Bill. Up in the hayloft I caught a glimpse of him. On a bale, nearest to the dilapidated window, there lay my Bill, the picture of loneliness. He looked right straight in front of him and never shifted his eyes.

I stood and watched him for a few minutes, then, stepping behind a post, whispered: "Bill."

One ear went up, the eyes blinked once or twice, but otherwise he remained unchanged. He was afraid to trust his sense.

Again I whispered: "Bill, Oh Bill," and then hid myself.

I did not hear him move, but when I peeped out from my hiding place I found the gaze of his true eyes upon me and, with a whine and cry, my Bill and I were partners once again.

What a meeting that was I cannot describe to you, and, were I to attempt it, you would laugh at our silliness. Still, I think that some of you would not laugh and you will need no description of the scene.

That night saw Bill and me back in our ramshackle attic, and we sat up late into the morning exchanging experiences.

Divedom was still flourishing. The reform movement had subsided after the election, and things grew livelier every day. In spite of my ocean voyage and change of scene, my health was not very good, and it took considerable time to eliminate all traces of my African adventure.

There is an old German saw, which reads that any one that goes travelling can tell a good many tales afterward. Not being strong enough to take up my former calling of "bouncer," I hung around the back room of Steve Brodie's place on the Bowery, and became a raconteur par excellence. It was not my rhetoric or elocution which made me the lion of the hour. It was solely the recapitulation of my trip, and, particularly my African experience. This should not astonish you, for, I beg to assure you, Bowery boys are not in the habit of extending their tours to the Dark Continent, confining their excursions mainly to Hoboken and other convenient picnic grounds along the Hudson or East River.

I cannot mention the name of Steve Brodie without relating to you a curious phase of fraud, which is not entirely without humor. In saying this, I do not refer to Mr. Steve Brodie's accomplishments in the bridge jumping line. Whether he really did jump from the Brooklyn and other bridges is a question, which will never disturb the equanimity

of the world's history. I may have my opinion and a foundation for it, but have neither the inclination or time to air it.

It was not very long before the stories of my travels had been told and told again, until every one of the *habitués* of the Brodian emporium was surfeited with them. This largely curtailed the number of drinks bought for me by admiring listeners, and I was sorely puzzled how to fill this aching void. I was not yet fully able to "hustle" very much, and still stuck to the sheltering shadow of Steve Brodie's back room.

It was the veriest chance that put me in the way of a new "graft" and again brought me the surety of food and drink. I became a splendid exemplification of the saying that life is but a stage and we players of many parts.

The scheme developed finally owing to prevalent hero-worship. Take the greatest celebrity of the day, push him into a crowd which is not aware of his identity, and he will pass unnoticed. But only properly label him and the multitude will kneel before the erstwhile nonentity.

Now, while we always have the inclination for hero-worship, heroes are rather scarce and not always handy for the occasion. This is especially the case on the Bowery, where quantities of heroes

are always supposed to be waiting around, "but ain't." Their supposed presence draws the usual attendance of worshippers, and it was solely for the purpose of not wishing to disappoint these worthy people that Steve Brodie, with my co-operation, decided upon a plan, which proved satisfactory from the start, and was the means of conveying many pleasant recollections into the houses of many uptown people and into the rural homes of our land.

The plan itself was very simple, and was originated by John Mulvihill, at the time the dispenser of liquids of the Brodie establishment.

The Horton Boxing Law had not yet been thought of, and the fistic cult had more followers than ever before. A few of the lesser lights of pugilism had their permanent headquarters at Brodie's, while some aspirants for champion honors and even real champions dropped in whenever happening to be in the neighborhood.

Brodie's well engineered fame and the many odd decorations and pictures in the place did not fail to draw the many, and they, after inspecting Brodie and the other oddities, invariably inquired if "some prominent fighters" were not present. As a rule, Johnnie Mulvihill was able to produce some celebrity to satisfy this craving of the curious, but there were times when the stock of stars was very

low; then the mentioned plan was resorted to. It was the inspiration born of emergency.

On a certain evening I happened to be quietly sitting in the desolated back-room. Business was dreadfully slow. My quiet was suddenly disturbed by Mulvihill, who came tearing through the swinging doors.

"Say, Kil, you got to do me a favor. Steve is out, and there ain't a single solitary man in the place whom I can introduce to the bunch I got up against the bar. They just came in and are fine spenders, but I'll lose them if you don't do this for me."

Mulvihill's request was not fully understood by me, yet, owing him many debts of gratitude for having given me a drink on the sly and for having often shared his corned beef and cabbage with me, I was quite willing to do him the favor desired, which, I thought, would be nothing else than to "jolly" the men at the bar into the buying of more drinks.

"No, no," interjected Mulvihill, "that ain't what I want you to do."

He immediately unfolded his scheme, which was nothing more or less than that I should face the expectant as a pretended Jack Dempsey, famous throughout the land as one of the best and squarest fighters that ever entered a ring.

Naturally, I rebelled, not wishing to expose myself to an easy discovery of the palpable fraud, but Mulvihill pleaded with his most persuasive voice.

"Don't you see, those fellows don't know Jack Dempsey from Adam. Any old thing at all would convince them they are in the presence of the real man, and you know enough about Jack Dempsey and his history not to be tripped up by those fellows, who never saw a prize fight in their lives."

Who could resist such gentle pleading? I could not, and followed my mentor in the path of deception.

Assuming the proper pose, I stepped into the barroom and was ceremoniously introduced by Mulvihill to the "easies," who had traveled quite a distance to bask in the radiance of a real fighter.

"Gentlemen, permit me to introduce you to the famous champion of the world, Mr. Jack Dempsey," quoted the artful Mulvihill, and, thereby, started me in a repertoire, which, in the number of different rôles cannot be surpassed by the most versatile actor.

The visitors pumped my hands and arms with fervid enthusiasm and showed their appreciation of the honor afforded them by copious buying of many rounds of drinks.

Well, the ball had been set rolling and it was a long time before it stopped.

The plan proved surprisingly profitable, at least for Steve Brodie, and although Mulvihill and I had to be satisfied with the crumbs from the feast, we had a lot of fun out of it and that was no mean recompense. You can imagine some of it, when I tell you that rather often some of the "sightseers" would bring themselves to my remembrance (?) by recalling to me something, which had happened to me (?) in their own town, or how they had seen me defeat Tom, Dick or Harry by one mighty swing from my tremendous left.

If there was fun in it, there was also some embarrassment attached to it. The male sex is not the only one which admires physical prowess, and ladies, escorted by gentlemen, appeared quite frequently at this newly founded shrine of pugilistic worship.

I cannot recollect having ever been so confused as I was on a certain night when I was cast for the rôle of Jake Kilrain, the man who tried to wrest the heavyweight championship from the redoubtable John L. Sullivan. In my limited but appreciative audience were several ladies.

A short while after my introduction I noticed a lot of whispering among the ladies. One, the

spokeswoman, stepped over to me and presented the guest of the others.

"Oh, Mr. Kilrain, you must have a perfectly developed arm and chest. They are necessary in your profession, are they not? And may we not have the privilege of testing your strength?"

Before I fully realized what they intended to do they had gathered around me and with many "oh's" and "oh, my's" they began to feel my biceps and to prod me in the chest.

Of course, this was only an odd occurrence, and did not happen every night, but it did not help me to respect my "betters."

It was also very embarrassing when, at the same time, I had to "double" and even "treble." As an illustration, just let me tell you that in one evening, and at the same time, I represented Jack McAuliffe at the head of the bar, Mike Boden at the end of it, and Johnny Reagan in the back-room—all well-known pugilists and champions in their class. My audiences were especially annoying that night, holding me down to dates and details and keeping me on the edge of apprehension lest I should mix my identities.

Also, on a certain auspicious occasion, while portraying a certain renowned pugilist with admirable accuracy, the said pugilist happened to appear on

the scene in person and it was only his true friendship for me which prevented the imitation ending in a fizzle, if not worse.

Now, when all that lies behind me and belongs to a different world and personality, I cannot fail to see the wrongness of it, but, at the time of its happening, I cannot deny having often laughed heartily at the silliness of those gaping curiosity-seekers.

Later, when on account of a disagreement with Steve Brodie, I transferred my headquarters to the palace of the king—Barney Flynn, the King of the Bowery—at the corner of Pell street and the Bowery, we instituted another fraudulent scheme intended to interest and entertain our many friends and provide drink and small change for us.

The palace of the King of the Bowery is not a very imposing building. On the ground floor a saloon, overhead a lodging house, it serves the two purposes of refreshing and resting the subjects of his majesty. For two weighty reasons the saloon has always been the Mecca of the curious. It is, so to speak, the entrance-gate to Chinatown and, also, the official address of Chuck Connors.

Besides the transient crowds of nightly visitors to Chinatown, the saloon is often honored by calls from literary personages. For some time, it seemed

Jackey Doodles. Barney Flynn. Jumbo. "Chuck" Connors.
A typical group at Barney Flynn's side door.

to be the proper thing for writers of a certain genre to come there to study types.

Right here let me say, that, without wishing to discredit any writer of dialect stories, I have yet to find the story which presents the idiom of the Bowery as it is spoken. I have taken the trouble to compare different stories—each one guaranteed to be a true and realistic study of the underworld—written by different writers and the discrepancies in the dialect are flagrant.

One, throughout his entire tale, puts "youse" in the mouth of his most important character. The other only uses "ye." One spells the question: "Do you?"; the other phrases it: "D'you?"

Perhaps this also applies to other stories written in New England or Southern dialect, but whether it does or not, it seems to be a case of "you pays your money and you takes your choice."

I have yet to see the "low life" story which is not studded with "cul" and "covey." Take my advice and do not use this form of address on the Bowery. They would not understand it and, therefore, would feel insulted.

Also, the men of the East Side are not so lacking in gallantry as to call their lady loves "bundles" and other similar names.

Then, in the matter of emphatic language the

writers are far from hitting the target. The favorite phrase is "Wot'ell," which is a hundred leagues removed from the distinct utterance with which this dainty bit of conversation is used by a Bowery boy in a moment of rhetorical flight.

So I might cite hundreds of instances.

The same carelessness of detail is manifested in other things, when writing about us. They are not all important errors or serious mistakes, but are grave enough to prove the unreliability of those "true East Side studies."

A writer, who for a considerable time, has been accepted as an authority on conditions in the underworld, is the most profligate in calling beings and things of the sphere he describes by their wrong name. He persists in claiming that thieves are called "guns" by police and fellows. Every man, who has lived all his life on the Bowery, as I have, knows that "gun" means an important personage. A millionaire is a "gun," so is a prominent lawyer, or a politician, or a famous crook; in short, anybody who is foremost in his profession or calling, be he statesmen or thief, is a "gun."

The Bowery is not hard to reach and, if so inclined, you can easily test my assertion. Take a page from one of the many East Side stories extant

and read it to a typical Bowery boy and he will ask you to interpret it for him.

The East Side dialect does not abound in slang. Whatever of it there is in it has been absorbed from the Tenderloin and other sources. To coin a funny slang phrase one must have time to invent and try it. They have no time for this on the East Side. where even time for schooling cannot always be spared. And that accounts for ungrammatical expressions and whimsically twisted sentences, but not for the idiotic gibberish and forced coinages of words slipped onto the tongues of my people.

The courtiers of the King of the Bowery, being a good-natured set of fellows, did not wish to curb the fervency of the literary "gents," and did their best to supply the ever-increasing demand for types.

The inner sanctum of the royal palace was divided from the outer room by the usual glass and wood partition. As Barney Flynn, the King of the Bowery, was a genial and jovial monarch, the more secluded chamber did not resemble a throne-room so much as a rendezvous of kindred spirits. It was a specimen of another strata of nether world Bohemia.

Tables and chairs were about the place in picturesque disorder. On the walls were three gigantic oil paintings, "done" by a wandering Bowery artist

for his board and lodging, including frequent libations. In one corner was the voluntary orchestra, consisting of Kelly, the "rake," the fiddler, and Mickey Doolan, the flute-player. Their day's work over—they were both "roustabouts" along the river front—the two court musicians would take their accustomed seats, and, without paying much attention to those present, would fiddle and flute themselves back again to their own green shores of old Erin.

They are pathetic figures, these men of the Bowery, who live their evenly shiftless lives in dreams of days passed, but not forgotten.

Being directly in the path to and from Chinatown, Barney Flynn's saloon was, at odd times, visited by the sociological pilgrims to this centre of celestial colonization. One night, a writer happened to stumble into the place. Whether his impressions were perceived in normal or abnormal condition is not known. The "gang" was engaged in a little celebration of its own, were observed by the writer, and, forthwith, Barney Flynn's and the royal staff became a mine for authors of low-life stories.

With the acumen acquired in my dive training, I saw very soon that those coming to study us were most willing to pay for grotesquely striking types.

The "real thing" had very little interest for them. What were we to do? To get the money we had to be types, therefore, whenever the word was passed that a searcher for realism—with funds—had arrived, we put on our masks, lingual and otherwise, to help along the glorious cause of literature.

No good purpose would be accomplished were I to mention the names of authors, who portrayed us so correctly. They are now celebrities with more paying aims. Their stories of us are still remembered, but only because of their "beautiful and pure sentiment," and not because of their "true realism." The latter differs with every writer and has bewildered the casual reader.

I am strongly tempted to call by name one, whose glory as demonstrator was dimmed in an unexpected manner. The writer in question had come here from Philadelphia, preceded by a reputation for his sympathy with those in the slums. Several of his "low down" stories had been hailed as the models for all the other writers of that tribe.

With his usual aggressiveness, not devoid of a touch of almost mediæval dash and chivalry, this young man threw himself into the study of New York slums with wonted ardor, and, naturally, mastered the subject almost immediately. Being socially well-connected, or, rather, being well-taken

up by society, he had no trouble in interesting his friends in his hobby. He was not niggardly in the spending of his money and quite popular on that account with my friends in Barney Flynn's. As a matter of fact, this promising young writer—a promise since then fulfilled—was a favorite of the highest and lowest; verily, an enviable position.

With note-book in hand, this young man sat among us for hours, jotting down phrases and slang expressions, manufactured most laboriously and carefully for the occasion. The interest of his friends increased, and one night we were honored by a visit of a large party of ladies and gentlemen, piloted by the aforesaid author.

Before the precious cargo had been unloaded from the cabs and hansoms, word had been taken to the back-room. As actors respond to the call of the stage-manager, so did we prepare ourselves to play our parts with our well-known finesse and correctness of detail. By that I mean, that we knew what was expected of us and that we emphasized our "characteristics" as we had seen them burlesqued on the stage.

The promising young writer was in his glory. With irrepressible glee, he introduced us, one by one, to his admirers, watching the effects of our "quaint" salutations. The chorus of enthusiastic approval

was unanimous. We were "absolutely charming," "perfectly thrilling," and "too droll for anything." Encouraged by this warm reception of our feeble efforts, we surpassed ourselves and assault, battery, murder was committed on the English language in most wilful frenzy. Taking it all in all, it was a gem of slum mosaic, and is still remembered by most of the offenders.

Having given our performance and exhausted our programme, we were told by our friends how "very glad, charmed and delighted" they had been at meeting us.

The doors had barely closed behind the last of the promising young author's friends, before all the performers rushed up to the bar to spend the money given to them for their instructive entertainment. The comments on the visitors were many and very much to the point, but were not uttered in the manufactured dialect. There was much laughter and many imitations of our late audience, and none of us had noticed that the promising young author, accompanied by a few of the party, had returned to look for a pair of gloves forgotten by one of the ladies. Part of our conversation was overheard and the laugh was at the writer's expense.

Of course, we instantly endeavored to rectify

our mistake and fell back to addressing each other as "cull" and "covey," but, somehow, the effect was not convincing.

One of his friends turned to the promising young author on leaving:

"Old man, you certainly deserve another medal for this, but this time, it should be a leather one."

I did not know then to what the above remark referred.

BOWERY POLITICS.

CHAPTER X.

BOWERY POLITICS.

THE death-knell of divedom had been sounded by the legislature. Albeit, it had been sounded before, without stopping the dives from resurrecting themselves. But vice had become so rampant, so nauseating that the righteous of the city braced their backbones a trifle stiffer than usual and insisted on having a committee of investigation appointed.

All the daily papers heralded the coming of the inquisitors in big head lines, and the inhabitants of divedom began to quake in their shoes like fallen angels on the eve of judgment day.

Shortly before the beginning of the upheaval, I had overcome one of my many spells of lassitude and gentlemanly idleness and had accepted the position of bouncer in the "Slide," the most notorious dive which ever disgraced a community.

When a body is covered with a cancerous growth, the most dangerous ulcer is the first to receive the

surgeon's attention. For that reason, the "Slide" was the first to be put under the prying probe. The investigation was thorough. The investigators and prosecuting officials, stimulated by fear of public censure and thoughts of political advancement, were merciless, and, as a consequence, the "Slide" was closed forever and the nominal proprietor sent to jail.

Without waiting for further developments, the other dive-keepers retired from business and a general cleansing process struck all quarters of the city.

The immediate effect of this was that a shifting of quarters of the vicious began. The harlots, bereft of their known places of business, hid themselves in the obscurity of virtuous surroundings, and the male element of the lowest dives congregated on the Bowery, ever the dumping-ground of human scum and offal. In a short time, the Bowery was full of a muttering crowd of able-bodied men, each one cheating the world out of an honest day's labor, all proclaiming loudly at the injustice which deprived them of their "living." Even the recollection is loathsome.

In company with a number of fellows who, like me, were "thrown out of work" by this "uncalled-for interference," we established headquarters in a gin-

mill owned by a legislator. As a matter of course, the "back-room," seemingly a legislative annex, was very much in evidence, and by no means subdued in its proceedings. If anything, the business behind the "partition" had increased in volume since the other dives, operated by less influential citizens, had been obliged to close. So we have here another of the many paradoxes of our political conditions. While his fellow-legislators were scouring the city with really commendable zeal to rend the evil-doer limb from limb, this being of their kin could be seen daily in front of his hall, sunning himself in the radiance of his increased prosperity and influence, and looking with self-satisfied smile across Chatham Square at the closed windows of minor dives.

Yes, as the Romans clothed the men of wisdom and love of country in the flowing robes of dignity and called them patriots, statesmen and senators, so do we take—take by the will of the people—the men fat of jowl and fat of paunch from beneath us and place them above us in the seats of the mighty and give them power over us. And if you would growl at my saying "from beneath us to above us," and would wrathfully confront me with the slogan of political and other equality, I would not wish to stand in your way of being their equal, but

would have trifling respect for your integrity. As I tell the stars by seeing them and find but small difference in their lustre, so do I tell the rascals by their rascality, and there is small difference in the degrees of rascality.

Senators! Rome and Albany! Would the difference of time, of centuries, were the only one between them!

In all governments by and for the people, the making of the nation lies with the common people; that great mass, which you would call "rabble" were it not for the continental sound of the word and the danger of being quoted. An ever-watchful press keeps its eye on you, and would readily pillorize you as an offender against the most sacred of our possessions and privileges; our sacred freedom; our sacred equality; our sacred franchise, and, by no means lastly, our sacred screaming eagle, screaming ofttimes from veriest agony. The buncombe of press and loud-mouthed gabbers has decreed it to be treason to see the truth and to speak it, and you must, to be above suspicion of being a traitor to the land you love, on the Fourth of July let off in sissing streams of pyrotechnics your patriotism, which, after its one gala day, is forgotten for the rest of the year in the strenuous pursuit of getting all you can out of "what's in it."

Bowery Politics.

The common people of the fields and meadows plow, sow and reap their harvest. They pluck the weeds from out among the useful growth and stamp them under foot. The common people of our cities live "downtown"—that vague and indefinite region —in tenement and barracks. (Notice how "down" and "common" always run together).

They have no knowledge of agriculture, and, with their seldom sight of plant or flower, even the stinkweed, for it is leafed and green, finds a welcome and place among them through their ignorance. Yes, more, it is cared for and nurtured until, as all ill-weeds, it grows to tremendous proportions, overshadowing and dwarfing those who have spared its life instead of plucking it out by the roots and pressing the heel upon it.

Who plants the weeds? Who is their sower? They care not.

Does not the same blessed sunshine and dew of heaven fall upon them as on the corn and roses? And do they not get more of it than the flower and the fruit-bearing plant? For they are greedy and strive for that which is not theirs according to merit.

Not most, but all the men, who played their part in our history so well as to be immortalized forever were self-made from the field and farm. Remember that there they destroy the weeds!

Not most, but all the men, who have made it a risk to a fair name and reputation to become actively engaged in the affairs of one's own country and state were self-made from the slums and gutters, with their only chance of immortalization via Rogues' Gallery. We of the city do not destroy the weeds!

They of the gutter, who have been forced upon and above the multitude, if not caught or not too notoriously prominent, keep the data of their success and formulative period secret. If, however, they run foul of the calcium, which often strikes, unexpectedly, dark places, they become arrogantly defiant in their ill-gotten might. Even against the scorn of the decent and to the awe of their own kind, they swing themselves onto the pedestal of the self-made man and strike their pose. All that is intended as a parallel to several rail-splitting and canal-boating men in our little history, who, as a "patriot" remarked, deserve a whole lot of credit "even if they was farmers."

Then, when forced into the public focus from their disturbed obscurity, is theirs the cry of repentance? Do they sob and cry: "Peccavi! Yes, I have sinned! I have wronged you and my country! Have mercy and forgive!"

If it were that it would be the cry of a tortured

soul, rotten and distorted, yet still a soul and worthy of the chance of atonement. No; what reaches us from the usurped pedestal is the self-satisfied grunt of the swine: "Look and behold! You know or can surmise what I have been! Look now and wonder at what I am and how I got there!"

Surely this affront is resented and the daring knave pulled from his lofty perch to be punished for his insults and ill deeds? Some are foolish and un-American enough to suggest such a course of proceeding. But what really does happen is a taking up of that refrain of self-adulation by the admiring throng. There in almost worshipping attitude, we find that the chicaning game of politics makes mates of all sorts and conditions of men, and pickpocket and tax-paying citizen, cut-throat and that very peculiar animal, the intelligent workingman, all kneel in equal humility before the rum-soaked idol of their own creation.

A subject for deep guesswork is where the workingman keeps his well advertised intelligence. To claim to be one thing and then prove yourself the opposite, which, in this case means a fool, is a rather absurd proceeding. Presumably a good part of that intelligence is occupied in defending their rights, which nobody assails. Howling and haranguing do not require much intelligence, and of both the "in-

telligent" workingman does more than enough and to no purpose. When the time of his usefulness approaches—although it should be the time for him to assert himself—he stops his howling and listens to the strongly flavored persuasion of the wily politician—the weed he permitted to grow and to prosper—and becomes the gently led sheep, to awaken after election and find himself the twin brother of the donkey. They will not recognize that far better, by virtue of his sincerity, would be the sincere demagogue as leader than the dishonest politician of the gutter breed.

No man can choose his birthplace. Mansion and tenement have each furnished their quota of honest and dishonest men. If he of the gutter gets above it and gets there by means which are those of a man and an American, he will not lack the respect and esteem of those whose ranks he has fought to join. That is what proves this the land of opportunities and therein lies true equality.

There is another way to get out of the gutter, and that was the way employed by statesmen of the stamp of the Hon. Michael Callahan, of the State Legislature.

Mike Callahan's place in horticulture was most decidedly among the rankest weeds. "Lucky" Callahan, as he was sometimes called, had escaped the

inconvenient calcium of public opinion, and, on that account, little was known about his origin, except by his intimates. Perhaps bootblack, perhaps newsboy, he had early learned to make himself subservient to his superiors, genial to his equals and condescending to his inferiors. Of course, these social lines were drawn by him according to his viewpoint.

Mike's striving for political recognition was aggressive from the start, and, having no other aim or ambition, he threw himself into the game of intrigue and wire-pulling with all his energetic intensity. Never questioning, always obeying, he became the ideal plastic mass to be molded by the enterprising chiefs of the organization. His promotion from ward heeler to captain, and from captain to the leadership of the district was his logical reward.

Yet, even in spite of his usefulness, his ascendancy to the leadership was not accomplished in a day. He did not mind this much, his bulldog tenacity keeping him alive to his ultimate purpose. His manhood and individuality, whatever they might have been, had long been sacrificed.

To strengthen his own power in the district it was necessary to weaken the influence of the incumbent leader, and, to effect this, knowing nothing of diplomacy, Callahan resorted to plain treachery.

The fact that the leader to be deposed had been his benefactor and stanch friend was of small moment. Certainly Mike was sorry, but what could he do? Take a back seat and beat himself out of his chances? "Not much," said he, and invented the useful and often quoted phrase, "Friendship in poker and politics don't go."

Mike's assumption of the leadership was worked by decisive methods. There was no vagueness about him. The great leaders in the history of nations were endowed with attributes and traits of the highest and noblest order. Mike's most pronounced attribute in his functions as leader was directness. It was this that enabled some of the brilliant young men of the party press to apostrophize him as "rugged, bluff, stalwart, frank and straightforward."

The district contained a population in which the intelligent workingman was not greatly represented. The few of them who lived in the many lodging houses had very little belief left in the dignity of labor and toiled only enough to "square" themselves with their landlords and liquor dealers. Still, they were of use. They could talk beautifully about the rights of labor, and were encouraged—before election day—to spout grandiosely about the tyran-

nical oppression of the American workingman by the opposing faction.

The great majority of the voters in the district belonged to the class of grafters, and for that reason if no other, the Hon. Michael Callahan of the State Legislature was their born leader.

Callahan was at his best shortly before election. Then no man or woman—unfortunately the ladies of the district would indulge too strongly—had to linger in the throes of the law. It was the sacred duty of the leader to call daily at the police court to save his constituents and their "lady friends" from their impending fate.

On the eve of election no time had to be wasted in speculating on how much the free and independent voter could expect to receive for the exercise of his sacred franchise. According to the amount sent down from the headquarters of the organization, Mike's ultimatum would settle the market price of votes. One or one and a half, or two dollars were the rates paid, although the last named rate was only given to liquidate the voter's claim at the most critical periods. In this way the voter could figure with certainty, and with very little interruption resume his dissertation on the betterment of municipal and national politics.

The most important events in our history were

conceived amidst surroundings of severest simplicity. No marble hall, no lofty council chamber, just the Common with its green sward and sturdy oak was the favorite meeting place of our forefathers. In the shadow of the mighty tree they spoke of liberty, of the rights of man and of the welfare of our country, and we reap to-day the benefit of their integrity, in spite of the machinations of politicians, whose very thoughts are a pollution of patriotism.

A careful and thoughtful student of American history, the Honorable Mike tried to live up to tradition as much as possible. Customs have changed, civilization has progressed, real estate has risen in price, and the political leader of to-day has felt himself obliged to substitute the gin-mill and the dive for the Common of old. Besides, "there is not much in Commons," excepting when the city fathers, in the goodness of their charitable hearts, decide to create another breathing place and playground for the poor children of the East Side, and, thereby can get a "chance at" the property owners of the site.

When one is a leader, one must do as leaders do. Mike could not swerve from the accustomed practice, and, nolens volens, found himself the proprietor of a dive. But, forced into this, he had at

least the satisfaction of opening this adjunct to his legislative office on the Common, or Square, as it is now called. True, there was no sturdy oak and no green sward, but there were elevated railway pillars and their shadows were quite sufficient for the practice of side issues in politics. The oak bears only acorns. The pillars and their shadows bore better fruit of silvery and golden sheen, and their sturdiness was often welcome to the backs of the many weary pilgrims who had traveled far to imbibe the pure draught of American patriotism as dispensed by the Hon. Michael Callahan of the State Legislature.

With the characteristic modesty of great men, Mike refrained from making the exterior of his place too showy. This superficial attraction to his resort was absolutely needless, as his more lasting fame—some detractors called it "disgraceful notoriety"—was firmly established. Did he not have several fist-fights with "officious" police officers to his credit, and, did he not openly dare and defy all known authorities to "monkey" with him. He feared no man but one, and that one only, because he was a more successful thug than himself and the Great Leader and Chieftain.

Dives of a certain kind make no effort to attract transient trade by bright, or, at least, neat and clean

exteriors. Their business is not supplied by the honest man, who is looking for an honest place to have an honest drink. They depend on that flotsam and jetsam that can find a dive blindfolded. Callahan's place was more suggestive than attractive in its front and the interior was fairly dazzling in its austere plainness. Sawdust and traces of former expectorations were the most evident features in the bar-room, which only ran the length of the bar. At the end of it a partition jealously claimed the rest of the space for the back-room. There, and not in front, was the real business transacted. The front, a pretense of respectability; the back, without any pretense whatsoever.

I cannot tell you what furnished the real attraction of the back-room. A minimum clearance of space in the centre of the room was reserved for dancing and surrounded by tables and chairs which were nightly occupied by young men and women, many of whom had been born and brought up in the immediate neighborhood, under the very eyes of the legislating dive-keeper. But that fact made no difference to this vile thing, empowered by our sanction to make laws which were to safeguard homes, property and life.

And there, safe in the protecting radius of our friend and statesman, we found a resting-place

MIKE CALLAHAN'S SALOON IN CHATHAM SQUARE.
The entrance to Chinatown on the right.

for our enforced retirement from dive activity, and there, in all my uncleanness, there came to me the sweet messenger of a newer, better life, and took me from it by the all-powerful persuasion of an unquenchable love.

Before telling you how this miracle transformed me in a way, which will tax my power of description to the utmost, I must relate to you the one and only attempt we, myself and two cronies, made to get away from a life which was the only one we knew.

A PILGRIMAGE TO NATURE.

CHAPTER XI.

A PILGRIMAGE TO NATURE.

It was in May. The side-walk in front of Mike Callahan's dive was wide, and we, the gang of discharged dive employees, were in the habit of lounging on the empty beer barrels along the curb or sticking ourselves up against the swinging doors of the place. People, whom we knew from having met them in the "better" days, when we were still working, often passed by and were eagerly hailed by us in the hope that they might buy a drink for our thirsty throats.

Corner loafers are despised by all people who lead useful lives, and justly so. Still, there is something very moving in thinking about the dreary existence of these fellows. With brains as empty as their pockets, they assemble with praiseworthy regularity at their open-air clubs, and waste their days in pessimistic conjectures. The loafer is a born pessimist and cynic. No matter what subject or event you may mention to him, he will sneer at it and promptly proceed to pick it to pieces. His criticisms are as

acidly sarcastic as his excuses are ingenious. Ask him his opinion about the work done by some skilled mechanic, and he will find a multitude of faults and then expound how the job ought to have been done. Surprised at his technical knowledge you ask in a mild way why he does not put his evident ability to practical use, and are forthwith shocked by suggesting such a thing to a man, who has such a wealth of haughty and convincing reasons for remaining a loafer.

Loafers are forever hovering in the ante-room of crime. If his Satanic Majesty bethinks himself of his own and calls them, they willingly and without compunction, do any crooked commission provided it does not require too much physical courage. After due time, crime seems easy, they have not yet been caught, and from their familiarity with evil-doing, and not because of any lately awakened courage, they commit deeds which are called "desperate" by every conscientious reporter.

Jack Dempsey, Frank Casey and myself formed a sort of inner circle in the larger gang. We often philosophized together, exchanged ideas and commented on things in general. At one of our confabs, Frank Casey seemed to be entirely out of humor.

"What's the matter with you, Frank?" I asked.

"What do you think there is? There's nothing the matter with me, excepting that I'm dead sick o' this game." We could see he was deeply moved by some unsuspected emotion and were deeply interested in its development.

"I tell you what I'd like to do," he resumed. "I'd like to cut this all out and go to work some place. There's nothing in this kind o' life and it's the same every day. See, it's years and years since I done what you may call an honest day's work."

"Ah, you're only kidding!"

"Kidding?" he echoed, indignantly. "Say, Kil, and you, too, Dempsey, I was never more serious in me life. What are we getting out o' this? It's hanging round here all day, looking for graft and the few pennies to go to bed with or to buy a beef-stew; and when a fellow does make a piece o' money, does it do him any good? Not on your life! If you flash it, you got to blow it in for booze, and if you don't they think you're no good, and the whole gang gets sore on you. A fellow that's working and making his dollar and a half or two dollars a day, is better off than the whole bunch of us taken together."

"For the love of heaven, you ain't thinking about going to work?"

"That's just what I'm doing, and the sooner I can start in the better," attested Casey with emphasis.

A warm discussion followed. It is hard to tell if it was the novelty of the proposition or Casey's evident sincerity, but Dempsey and I began to consider it very seriously.

"Say Casey," I asked, "supposing the three of us really wanted to go to work, where could we get it? They don't take men like us in shops or factories, where there are a whole lot of trained help looking for work every day. So, even if we wanted work, we couldn't get it."

"Is that so? You're talking as if New York City is the whole thing. What's the matter with the country? That's where we ought to go, because we'll never amount to anything here. In the first place, even if we was to get jobs here, the three of us would be going on a drunk on the first pay day and stay on it until we're broke. But in the country you ain't got no chance to spend your money, and it's healthy and it's better anyway."

The surety of Casey amused me.

"Will you tell me where you have ever been in the country to know so much about it, and where you got your information from?"

"That don't make no difference," insisted Casey

stubbornly, "I know there's lots o' fellows going over to Philadelphia or Jersey or some place over there every year about this time, and they come back like new and with money from picking strawberries and whatever else there's growing out there."

We put our heads together, discussed the matter, came to the conclusion that, surely, we would not be in worse circumstances in the country than we were in the city, and resolved to try our luck at strawberry picking.

To financier our expedition was our first duty. We skirmished round and raised about six dollars as our joint capital. Casey went on a secret errand to make inquiries of some well-known "hobo" authority where to go, and how to get there, and then undertook to personally conduct the tour into the unknown land.

Baggage did not encumber us. I had thought of taking my good old pal, my Bill, along with us, but did not wish to expose him to the dangers, which, no doubt, were lurking for us.

At the ferry, Casey flew his flag and read us the last orders. To save our small capital, we were to walk or "jump" freight trains. Also, for reasons of economy and sagacity, we were not to indulge in one solitary drop of anything intoxicating.

The first hitch occurred in Hoboken. To get a

freight train was impossible. Dempsey and I never knew why we were unable to make connections, as Casey's plausibility drove the question from our minds and made us follow him blindly.

We walked from Hoboken to Newark. It was a scorching afternoon, the sand was hot and heavy under foot, and our mouths became parched at an uncomfortable rate. A few wells and pumps were passed by us, but Casey would not permit us to slake our thirst, as "Newark is only a step or so further on, and it's dangerous to monkey with them country people. They got dogs and are kind of suspicious of fellows like us, who come from New York."

Ah, really and truly, it would have been the most confiding and unsophisticating nature that would not have been suspicious of us, no matter where we hailed from. Three tough specimens of humanity, indeed, we were!

No stop was made until we reached the railroad station at Newark. Quite a crowd was assembled to wait for either an incoming or outgoing train, but we, without paying the slightest attention to the many mistrustful glances given in our direction, raced for the ice-water tank, prepared to gorge ourselves with the cooling drink.

Casey was the last to have his turn at the chained

tin cup. He started off splendidly, but paused after his first gulp and smacked his lips in a most critical manner.

"Taste anything funny in that water?"

We replied in the negative.

"There's something wrong with it, just the same," Casey persisted. "And do you know, the worst thing a man can do this time o' the year is to drink bad water."

"But we got to drink something. We ain't going to drink any beer, and I hate to spend money for soda and ginger-ale and stuff like that," remarked Dempsey.

"That's true enough," admitted Casey, "but, I'll tell you what we'll do. The same fellow who gave me points on how to get to the strawberries, also told me that the biggest glass of beer in the country was sold right here in Newark. Now, we ain't going to get full or anything like that, but, being as the water ain't fit to drink, I guess we might have one, just one o' those biggest schooners, which I never seen and which, besides quenching our thirst, are surely worth looking at, the same as any curiosities."

Without the aid of a Baedeker, we found our way to Newark's most interesting spot. We entered the hospitable tavern at about seven o'clock,

and, at ten o'clock, were still tarrying there admiring the size and beauty of the biggest beers in the world.

Regardless of the size of the drink, the beer alone,—never a product of malt and hops—a vile concoction of injurious chemicals, is sufficient to put the indulger far above the most worrying troubles. Late that night, the quiet streets of Newark were profaned by three unsteady musketeers, who, with song and laughter, were making their way to the "meadows."

Only one more resolution made and broken. It was not the first and was not the last.

Out in the "meadows," the train-yard, where the freight trains were made up, we succeeded, after many mishaps, including Casey's tumble from a moving train into a ditch, in catching a train at about midnight. We had only traveled about a mile, when a trainman, stepping from car to car with lighted lantern, saw us huddled between the bumpers.

"Where are you fellows going?"

"Philadelphia," came the answer in sleepy, drowsy tones.

"You're on a wrong train. This train goes to the 'branch.' "

At the time we did not know that this was only

a common ruse to make "hoboes" leave the train and accepted it at its face value.

"Where did he say we were going?" asked Casey.

"To the 'branch,' wherever that may be," I answered.

"I guess we better get off, then. This train ain't going to Philadelphia," suggested Dempsey.

"What we'll get off for? This train goes somewhere, don't it? And it don't make much difference where it goes to, as long as it goes somewhere into the country and away from New York," said Casey, with the evident intention of ending further argument.

The heavy, damp night air and the drink partaken by us lulled us into deep slumber, forgetful of our precarious attitude. We had journeyed for hours without waking and were not aroused until the coldness in our limbs became actually painful. Without speaking a word and merely staring at each other we jolted on and on into the unknown, and the dawning morning.

Suddenly a brilliant spectacle caught our eyes. Coming out from wooded land, the train sped along a level stretch and we fed our looks on the Fata Morgana of a large city. The size, brilliancy of illumination and distance from New York left no doubt in our minds that we were not far from

Philadelphia, and had we known how to pray, we would surely have done so. I have never regretted the experience, still have no wild desire to repeat it. There are more easily obtainable joys in life than the riding on the bumpers of a freight train on a chilly May morning.

It was not long before we were slinking along Market street in Philadelphia. After fortifying ourselves against the bad consequences of our benumbing voyage by sampling some "speak-easy" whiskey, we visited "Dirty Mag's" famous all-night restaurant on Sixth street and feasted on steak-pie and coffee, with crullers included. The bill amounted to ten cents.

We were so tired out by our traveling that it was out of the question to continue our journey. Down on Calomel street we found a resting-place for our weary and frozen bones at fifteen cents per couch. It was almost noon before we woke from our sleep and held a conference. At its termination we hied ourselves to the nearby grocery store and spent almost the entire remainder of our depleted treasury in buying provisions for our trip into the wilds of Pennsylvania. After that, with a last parting drink, we turned our backs on Philadelphia and set boldly out to win our fortunes.

Just as the suburbs had been reached by us we

were reminded by our stomachs that we had forgotten to breakfast. An inviting tree stood nearby, a brook, as clear as crystal, was rippling past our feet, and the place seemed to be made for a picnic ground. The enjoyment of the meal was marred by the thought that now we would have no lunch or dinner.

"What's the use of worrying about that now? Besides, we won't have to carry so much," was Casey's way of consoling us.

We rose and began our tramp in earnest. For hours we walked, giving little attention to the things about us and only holding desultory conversation. Not one of us knew the route to the "strawberry country," and we were often obliged to ask people whom we met for directions. We had little luck in this. Most of the people addressed by us would quickly button their coats and hurry on without heeding us. Others would barely stop and throw us such a small scrap of information that, instead of enlightening us, they only bewildered us the more.

At last, Casey got tired of this way of securing information and burst upon us with his latest and brightest inspiration.

"It's no use of asking any o' these men. Most o' them are hayseeds and been to New York and have been buncoed. They can see in a minute that we're

from New York and ain't going to take no chances with us. It's different with women. They're always nice and gentle and, especially, when they get spoken to the way I know how to talk to them. Leave this to me. Don't ask any more men. Wait till we meet some women, and then I'll ask them, and then you'll be surprised in the difference."

Casey, who had given voice to this speech with properly inflated chest, proved himself to be a true prophet. We found there was a difference in the way in which men and women received our approach.

Before long, we saw two women with baskets coming our way.

"Now, you fellows want to keep a little behind, and watch me how I do this," was Casey's final instruction.

Giving his clothes a quick brushing with his hands and setting his hat jauntily over his ear, Casey went toward his fate with a grace all his own.

Dempsey and I could not hear the first passage of words, but it was hardly necessary, as the effects of it were immediately visible.

One woman proceeded to pummel Casey with her umbrella, while the other was trying to fit her market-basket on his head. When they saw Dempsey and me come running to the rescue, they left Casey

and took it on a run across the fields, but they took good care to shout back to us that they would have the sheriff or constable after us.

"For heaven's sake, what did you say to those women?" I asked Casey, after I had pulled the basket from his head.

"What did I say to them? They ain't civilized, and it don't make no difference what a fellow says to them kind o' people. I spoke to them like a regular dude. This is what I said: 'Ain't this a fine morning, girls. We're strangers here and didn't like this country very much until it was our good fortune to see you, who are sweeter than any sugar, and now we'd like to stay here if you will tell us the road to where the strawberries grow and where there are as many girls as beautiful as yourselves!' And the minute I said that they soaked me."

We consoled Casey and resumed our tramp.

It was now late in the afternoon and I determined that we should know something about our whereabouts. I stopped the very next man we met in such a way that he could not get away from us.

After assuring him that we had no intention of robbing him, I insisted on getting correct information.

Can you imagine our feelings when he told us that we had spent our time and energy in describing

circles around Philadelphia, without getting away from it?

Dempsey and Casey made no attempt to hide their chagrin. The blow was too crushing. I, also, felt fearfully discouraged, but did not want to give in.

"There is no use in going back. We're here now, and must go on. If we go back to Philadelphia, we might as well go back to New York. We're in the country now, and we might as well stay here. I don't care what you fellows do, I'm going to go ahead."

The last sentence was a fearful bluff. Had Dempsey and Casey decided to return to New York, I would have joined them on the spot. Fortunately, they adopted my way of looking at it, and we once more pursued our sorry pilgrimage.

Now, we were sure of penetrating right into the heart of the country and evidences of it were not lacking. Suburban villas grew fewer and fewer and we had to walk for a considerable distance before we passed another farmhouse. With our inborn stubbornness we kept plodding on, until our legs almost refused to obey.

It was the hour in which evening unwillingly yields supremacy to night. We felt it, as was proven by Casey in answer to Dempsey's question in regard to the time.

"Well, when it looks like this they always begin to light up in Callahan's, and that's about seven o'clock."

Again we were silent and tramped and tramped. Dempsey was the next to speak.

"Say, fellows, I ain't seen any strawberries yet. And even if we were to see any now, we couldn't go to work at them this evening, it being so late now, and I think the best thing we can do is to sit down some place and take a rest."

Only a few more steps and we saw a spot, which by you, would have been called a dell. We called it nothing, just saw the soft grass and, with one accord, sank down on it.

The tone of evening now rang unmistakably clear. Evening and its partner, the gloaming, were at the last and best moment of their supremacy. Too short, by far, are evenings in the country, those short brief hours of nature's neutral state, before retiring to its well-earned rest. But that I only feel now, and did not then.

Remember! this was my first night in God's country. Like thousands of others who live and die in the southeast corner of Manhattan—along the Bowery—I had never had a sight of nature. I could not have told a daisy from a rose; or a crow from a robin. All that I write here are the im-

pressions that linger in my mind of this, my first night with nature.

It was one grand moment in our lives, yet we did not feel it. Hold, I am wrong! We did feel it, perhaps subconsciously, but feel it we did. Our kind is not given to much talking while doing anything of import. Then our energies are in our task, no matter how dirty that may be. As soon as we rest, we change, and the silent drudge becomes a veritable magpie. We three were resting as, like three daisies in the wilderness, we sat in our dell, but there was something all about and around us that stopped our flow of talk from loosening itself.

We sat and stared, and the most insignificant changes in the tranquil scene before us left their unrecognized, yet deep impressions on us. And looking back through all the years passed since then, I see it all still before me, though I cannot attempt to picture it to you.

From where we sat it looked before us like the setting for a glorious play. On both sides, small sketches of woodland interjected just far enough to serve as the wings on the stage. Back of it, there was a grand, majestic last drop, a range of hills, running unbrokenly from where to where we could see. The cast, the actors of the play were supplied by all the many living things about us and, above

it all, like the last curtain, hung the forerunners of the coming night.

It was no tumultuous melodrama, no rollicking farce, it was a pastoral play so successful, so wisely composed and staged that from its first night it has been enacted every night through all the ages. No wonder that with so many rehearsals the scene, as we saw it, was played with perfection.

Out from a loophole in the sky, a bird came flying toward us with unfaltering swing. Night after night it had flown the same course, night after night it had the same rôle, that of bringing their share to the young striplings in the nest above our heads. Along the road came a creaking, lumbering farm-wagon. The farmer looked at us with suspicion, still, gave us a "good evening, boys." I do not know if we returned his greeting or not.

It was quiet, so quiet, that the many little noises, made by unseen beings, pealed like tornadoes of sound. The snatch of laughter, coming from the tree-encircled farm-house behind us, was as the laughter of a multitude; the chirrup of that homeward bound bird was as a lofty, airy chorus; the croaking of the frog was as a grunting wail from many, many, who never get above the very ground.

While we had sat staring holes into the air before us, evening had flown, and night, a gallant victor,

had unrolled the standard of the stars. I know I cannot tell you my impressions, but even had I the gift and genius of a hundred of our greatest writers, I could not convey to you what a picture that night, my first night in God's country, left with me. It seemed to me that all and everything, before becoming wrapped in slumber, gave one praise-offering to Above. The corn of the field and the poor lowly flower by the roadside and even the tiny blade of grass, they all were straightened by one last, upward tremor before relaxing to their drooping doze. The birds of the air and the beasts of the ground, all sounded their evening song. With some it was a thrill of sweetest divine melody, with others it was but a grunt, but it all seemed like a thanksgiving for having lived and worked a day made by the Creator of all.

And from beneath all this, the silent attitude of prayer and the intoned evening hymn of creatures rose onward, upward, like an anthem to the sky, where brilliant orbs and shining, milky veils were interwoven in a web of glory, and peeping over the tops of hours into the birthing cradle of another day. It is a witching hour, this hour, when stars and nature in unison sing their evening song.

Where nature is grandest, man most likes to profane it.

The sublime, sweet spell held us enthralled. Not a word had been spoken by us. How long we had sat there we did not know. How much longer we would have sat there is a matter of unprofitable conjecture. As if turned loose from the regions of the arch-fiend, with howling screech, with snorting, rumbling, rattling, a train, looking like a string of toy-cars in the distance, clattered along the range of hills, the last drop of our scene. Spitting fire before it, leaving white streamers behind it, the iron disrespecter of nature's sanctity rushed into the very heart of the hills and took the haze of idealism with it.

The spell was broken, and we were not long in getting back to terra firma.

"Say," remarked Casey very pensively, "ain't it very quiet here?"

"Well, I should say so," hastened Dempsey to corroborate him. "It's so quiet you couldn't sleep here if you wanted to. This ain't no place for us. Let's go."

We started ahead and tumbled along the country road. All directions, as to our route, were, for the present, forgotten. We only had one purpose now, to get away from the haunting quiet. With every step our nerves became more unstrung. A rabbit scooted across the road and made us grasp each

other's arms. The faint rustle of the leaves sent shivers down our backs.

Out in the open, we felt the hazy, vapory night air enshroud us, which showed every object in ghost-like mold. A dog barked far away, then it howled, and I can swear to it, we trembled.

It was not physical fear. It was the weirdness of the unaccustomed that played havoc with our reasoning powers. Some may doubt all this and mention as proof the "hoboing" tramps, who spend their most pleasing and profitable period of vagrancy in their country. I am not prepared to discuss this at all, but am quite sure that every tramp, at the beginning of his career as such, was similarly impressed on his first night in the country, provided he had not found shelter in a barn or haystack or had not been born and lived in the country before.

We, we were city bred to the bone, and noise was essential to us as ozone is to the country lad. He cannot sleep with noise,—we could not sleep without it.

Our musings—we had not spoken for a long time —were interrupted by Dempsey, who had fallen over a rail, which he had not noticed in the shadowy darkness. Yes, it was a full-fledged railroad track and, for some obscure reason, it seemed to possess a great deal of fascination for us. We were appar-

ently not able to get away from it. We stood and looked at it as if we had never seen a railroad track before.

This lasted until the ever-ready Casey interpreted our feelings.

"I wonder if this is the Pennsylvania railroad?"

That started a chorus of "wonders."

"I wonder which end of this runs into New York;" "I wonder how far we are from New York;" "I wonder if we could get to New York from here;" "I wonder how long it takes to get to New York from here;" "I wonder if there is a station near here."

How it happened, whether any one proposed it, or how we got there I do not know, but I do know that, quite unexpectedly, we found ourselves at a little wayside station, with a lot of milk cans on its platform. There is no mistaking the fact that we were entirely unbalanced mentally, and it was a good thing for the crew of the freight train, which rolled in to unload and load milk cans, that they were an easy-going crowd of men. We made no pretense of hiding ourselves, but climbed boldly on to the cars and would have committed murder had they attempted to put us off. The spectre of the stillness had taken possession of our brains, and we wanted to flee from it as from a plague.

Again the long, cold journey, and, then, at last, a great white sheen of shining lustre in the heavens told us that we were home once more to the city of our birth, of which we were so proud.

But could she be proud of us?

The rest of the night, or rather the beginning of the day, was spent in chairs in Callahan's back-room, which seemed like paradise to us after our "fierce" experience in the country. After a nap, I went to look for my Bill, who greeted me as if I had left him alone as long as I did on our previous separation, and then again settled down to grace Callahan's dive with my presence.

In a day our country trip was forgotten, and I felt quite resigned at taking up my career where I had dropped it. There was little hope of things in divedom brightening up for some time to come and I was perfectly willing to resume playing the gentleman of leisure, who makes his fluctuating living at the expense of his fellow men.

But the days in the old life were numbered. Only a short space of time more, and I was to be taken from the cesspool by one whom God must have sent solely for this end. Why this was and why I was chosen, neither you or I can answer, but it is enough for me to know that, even were every miracle of old found to be a fraud or sacrilege, the exist-

ence of one great, mighty, living God would be proven to me beyond the slimmest shadow of doubt by the miracle he performed on me by His sweetest prophet.

Lord my master, here I thank Thee, not only for having permitted me to live the life of purity and cleanliness, but also for having had me come from out and through the life of the most miserable and sinful. Mysterious are Your ways and Your purposes are not for us to know, but I have suffered, learned and prayed, and I know You will not let it be without avail. And if naught else I can do, give that for her sake, I shall always live in the way she wanted me to live and that was in Your way, God.

THE FRONTIER OF THE NEWER LIFE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FRONTIER OF THE NEWER LIFE.

Returned to New York from my Philadelphia trip, I immediately fell back into my old ways, which meant for the time being I established myself again as an ornament in and in front of Mike Callahan's dive in Chatham Square. Things in our line of business were growing quieter every day and no one seemed to know when this drought in the former land of plenty would cease.

Our temporary occupation during this lull was to "lay for" easy things and suckers. But even they seemed to grow fewer and, at last, we were reduced to a state of desperation. Then, when hunger and an unquenchable thirst were less and less satisfied, some of the gang overcame their inborn cowardice and turned "crooked." One, two and three would go on secret expeditions and return either with money or easily disposable goods, or would not return at all, at least, not for a long time. The gang could well afford to stand these occasional va-

cancies in the membership, as more than fifty constituted it and more and more were constantly joining it.

I am not making an untruthful statement and do not wish to tax your belief unduly when I tell you that I did not take active part in these "crooked" doings. My list of misdeeds is so full that one more or less would make but small difference therein, and I have no cause to tell you a lie.

Had it been necessary for me to turn "crooked" I would have surely done so, but it was not necessary.

I was the recognized leader of our gang, and leaders of or in anything always have certain prerogatives. Out of every expedition I received a small share. I was "staked" is the proper expression. The return I made for the "stake" was small enough.

In case one or more of the men were locked up in the city prison, I, not officially known to the police, had to visit them and act as go-between to lawyers and their "outside" friends. Were any barroom growls between one of the men and outsiders started I had to throw myself—regardless of the merits of the fight—into the mixup to end it quickly in favor of my brother in loaferdom .

Not having to go on any of the mentioned expeditions, I had all my time to myself and hardly ever

left Callahan's. In truth, I was in a fair way of becoming one of the monarchs of the Bowery, having, so far, been only one of the knight errants of that locality. It was the beginning of Summer, and excepting when business of a liquid or financial nature called me inside, I could have always been seen on my keg at the curb, flanked and surrounded by a galaxy, whose very faces made men, respectable men, clasp their hands over their watches and pocketbooks.

I remember, how once a "sport" hung up a prize for the "homeliest mug" in Callahan's, and a hurried ballot awarded me the prize. However, there were extenuating circumstances, which I do not care to recite, the whole matter being one not very interesting to me.

Hanging around the dives all day we "regulars" often found the time hang heavy on our hands. To help us over these periods of ennui we invented a gentle form of sport. The sidewalk was very wide, the traffic was heavy, the police, for reasons of policy, absolutely blind to our doings, what more did we need? From our kegs we looked, like the gallery of the play, at the passing show, and frequently became so interested in the ever-playing drama that we took part in it ourselves.

Is there more manly, noble sport than for the

many, with stamping horses and yelping, snarling dogs, to throw themselves on to the death-scared, fright-unwitted fox and tear him to his end, after having him partly finished by hoof beat and dog bite? Of course not. Were it unmanly, unwomanly, ignoble sport, our "better, upper" classes, our social leaders, would not enjoy it. We, of Chatham Square, aped our models in the higher circles, and, not having a fox in our collection of rare animals, chose the passing pedestrians as the objects of our sport.

Our imitation of our "betters" was fairly correct. If only one or two were on the kegs passers-by would not be molested; but when the gang was there in force, then woe to the unoffending man or woman, whose way led by us.

To be exact, our "sport" consisted of insults of various kinds to pedestrians. Old people—and especially old women—received the most of our playful attention. They were our favorite victims, as they were less likely to resent our brutishness. It brings a flush to my face when I think of our beastly cowardice. There is more manliness in one mongrel cur than there was in that whole gang of ours!

And in that sport I was the acknowledged leader. There were many variations to our game. We

would quickly put our feet between those of men and women passing by, would "trip them up" and send them sprawling to the pavement; we would throw rotten fruit and decayed vegetables at them; would deliberately run into them and upset their balance and, besides all this, would shower avalanches of filthy expressions on them. Why didn't they resent it? Because people who were obliged to pass there did not do it from choice, but because they were obliged to do so, and knew the calibre of our tribe. They knew that, like the rooster taken away from his dung-heap, singly and on different ground from our own, we were crawling, cowardly caricatures of men, and only brave when we could throw ourselves on One in mass.

Yet, withal, even loafers can be saved from their mockery of an existence, but different means from the stereotyped ones of the present day must be employed. Where is the harvest of the many millions sown on the East Side? The time, the day, the hour is ripe for a Messiah to the slums who will have much piety, more manhood and, most of all, common sense. Bring less talk and more muscle; less hymns and more work, and there will be an echo to your labor in every lane and alley.

My loaferish career ran along so evenly that I could not imagine such a thing as a break in it.

Without a moment's warning, in the most ordinary way, the message from across the frontier of decency was brought to me by one whom I cannot call otherwise than one of God's own angels.

It had been a most quiet day. In the early forenoon "Skinny" McCarthy, one of my intimate pals, had informed me that "something would be doing" that day. I gave him my rogue's blessing and sped him on his way.

"Skinny" belonged to the class of meanest grafters. His graft consisted in walking miles and miles looking for trucks and wagons left temporarily without the driver's protection. To whip something from the vehicle and then to accelerate his steps, at the same time holding the stolen article before him, was only a moment's effort. Naturally, the proceeds of "Skinny's" expeditions were never very large, but he kept at it so constantly and spent his few dollars so quickly that he was a rather handy acquaintance for me.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon of June the second when "Skinny" returned to Callahan's and, pulling me aside, whispered that he had done better than usual. I praised him for his zeal and luck, encouraged him to greater efforts, and then suggested that our thirst should find an immediate end. Forthwith, at a signal from me, several other

birds of our feather joined us and we celebrated "Skinny's" safe and welcome return in the customary way.

The only serious fault I had to find with "Skinny" McCarthy was that he could not stand very much drink. Just when the others would begin to feel the mellowing influences of the drink "Skinny" was always so intoxicated as to lose all control over his speech and actions. He was a bit of a hero-worshipper, and I—mind you, I—was his hero. As soon as the fumes of the stuff consumed would befuddle his brains he would declare with howling, roaring emphasis that he was a thief and proud of it, that he didn't care for what anybody thought of him as long as I was his friend, and that he was always willing to share with me, because he knew that I would stick to him if he should happen to get into "stir."

All this was very flattering to me and sounded sweet to my ears, yet, being of limitless capacity, I never found myself sufficiently drunk to enjoy this too public endorsement.

On this occasion—June the second—"Skinny," elated over his markedly successful expedition, bought drinks so fast that, in a little over an hour, he was near a state of coma. I, as leader of the gang, was more or less responsible for the individual

safety of my fellows, and, not caring to see "Skinny" utterly helpless so early in the afternoon, ordered a cessation of drinking and proposed an adjournment to the kegs at the curb, hoping the air would partly revive my ailing follower.

My suggestion was accepted, and I led the way to the sidewalk, closely followed by "Skinny."

Just as I had reached the curb and was about to seat myself on my keg I heard a slight commotion, followed by a muffled scream, behind me. Leisurely turning I saw what I had expected to see.

It was one of our customary frolics. "Skinny" McCarthy had wilfully and fiercely collided with a frail young girl. Although I could not see her face, her figure and general appearance denoted youth. But what did youth, age, sex or size matter to us?

They all stood about her in a circle, grinning and leering at her. I, too, meant to join in the general enjoyment. But before my facial muscles had time to shapen themselves into a brutish laugh the girl wheeled around, looked at McCarthy, at me, at all of us and, quite distinctly could I read there the sentence: "And you are MEN!"

Possibly there was a psychic or physical reason for it, but whatever it was I could almost feel when her look fell on me the bodily sensation of some-

thing snapping or becoming released within me. It was as if a spring, holding back a certain force, had been suddenly freed from its catch and had, catapult-like, sent a new power into action.

I had neither the inclination or intelligence to explain it all to myself. Instead, I rushed into the crowd, tore through it, until I stood in front of McCarthy, who, without a word from me, received a blow from me under his ear, felling him to the ground.

This decisive and unexpected action on my part amazed the members of the gang so that they stood motionless for several seconds before paying any attention to McCarthy, who was lying motionless on the sidewalk. They did not know what to make of it. Was I more drunk than they had judged me to be? Was there a private grudge between McCarthy and myself?

That I had acted solely to save the young lady from further insult would have been—had they surmised it—as inexplicable to them as it was to me.

I took no heed of their wondering attitude, but, in gruff tones, asked the young lady to come with me. She was completely bewildered and followed me mechanically.

Poor "Skinny" in his stunned condition was still on the ground, and this, as always, furnished an in-

teresting spectacle to the many idle gapers, who had joined the rank of spectators. I, holding the girl by her arm, made my way through them without any trouble and then addressed my companion.

"Say, sis, I guess I better walk a block or two with you, because I think it's better. That push there won't do you nothing, but they're all drunk and might get fresh to you again."

Surely, it was not a very cavalierly speech, but, somehow, it was understood and remembered. Often in the future, we—she and I—had our laugh at this offer of my protectorate, which was word for word remembered by her.

The crowd through which I had roughly forced a passage for the girl and myself closed again behind us, and, with that, the doors of my old life creakingly began to move on their rusty hinges and slowly started to close themselves entirely. They did not close themselves with a bang and a slam—if they had done that I might have been aware of their maneuver and would, most likely, have offered resistance—and, even their slow move was not known to me then, but only recognized by me in the years to come. This happens to many of us. We are successful or unfortunate, rich or poor, and can in our acquired state clearly trace back the line to an event which was the parting of the ways.

THE
BEGINNING OF THE MIRACLE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MIRACLE.

For the first time in my life I found myself playing the part of a chivalric knight, and, let me assure you, the poorest actor could not have played it worse. Part of my existence had been to watch others. Not to learn from them by observation, but to find their weaknesses. While engaged in the most potent part of my observations, I was never so concentrated in them that I entirely overlooked the minor details. So I had seen gentlemen help ladies to and from carriages, had seen them assist their women friends across gutters and crossings, and open doors for them. Walking beside the young lady I knew something was expected from me in the line of politeness, but I who had always been accustomed to go up "against the hardest games and unfavorable odds," felt most uncomfortable at not being sure what to do in a case like this. Perhaps this was the reason, why I, instead of seeing her along for a block or two, kept

on walking beside her, because I did not know how to take leave without giving serious offense by my way of expressing my leavetaking. The truth of the matter was I was afraid.

This confession of mine will lead you to think that there was something about her inspiring awe or fear. But you are wrong, very wrong.

She was not tall, not statuesque. She was not a "queenly looking" girl judged by external appearance. Her queenliness was within, so potent, so convincing, that neither man nor beast could refrain from bowing to it. I was in the dilemma of wanting to be a gentleman, a courtier to my queen, and not knowing how to be one.

Somehow impelled, I kept on walking beside her. She was not wanting in expressions of gratitude, but I did no better than to acknowledge them with deep-toned grunts.

To explain matters, she told me she was a teacher in one of the near-by schools, and was compelled to pass our "hang-out" every day on her way to and from home. In exchange for her confidence I should have introduced myself, but, alas! this big, hulking oof knew naught of politeness.

But the bonny little lass was a marvel of tact and diplomacy. Not commenting on or pretending to notice my neglect of the customary introduction, she

appointed herself inquisitor-in-chief. She put me on the witness stand and cross-examined me. Leading questions were fired at me with the rapidity of a trained lawyer. Ere I knew it, she knew all about me and I felt ashamed at having a little mite like her break down all the barriers of that reticence on which I prided myself.

We walked on, the street traveling beneath and unnoticed by us. She stopped me at Houston street and the Bowery and I looked about me as if descended from a dream. She wanted me to leave her there and wanted me to return to Chatham Square, or from wherever I had come. But the bulldog in me growled and persisted in seeing her to her door. We halted at a modest dwelling-house in Houston street, near Mott street. She thanked me with very much feeling and, expecting a modicum of manners from me, waited for a second for my response. There are things which we learn without being aware, and I knew and felt that I should say something, but my courage had fled, my knees weakened under me and the words which I meant to utter stuck in my throat, kept there by my fear of not being able to use the right expression.

At last I squeezed out a gruff "Good night," and then turned to leave. I was not permitted to go.

"Where are you going?" she asked. "I am afraid

you are anxious to return to that place on Chatham Square. Don't go there."

"Where else can I go?"

"Where else?" she asked, with a mingling of pity and contempt. "Mr. Kildare, I have absolutely no right to interfere with your business, but I have the right to tell you the truth. You may not know it or would if you did know it, deny it, but you and most of the men of that gang are too good to be of it. We are strangers, and you may think me presumptuous, but a man, strong and able bodied as you, sins against his Maker if he wastes his days in an idleness which is hurtful to himself and others."

"Oh, I heard that before, young lady, but that sort of talk don't amount to anything."

"It doesn't amount to anything? From what you have told me about yourself and from what I have seen of the street life, I am afraid it is not absolutely impossible that, one of these days, you may find yourself in serious trouble. And, Mr. Kildare, you can rest assured that the prisons are full of men who are convinced when it is too late that this sort of talk does amount to something. You say you do not know where else to go? The evening is beautiful. There are parks, the river-front, the Brooklyn Bridge, where one can go and sit and think——"

"Think," I interrupted, "now, what would I be thinking about?"

She remained silent for some little while and then held out her hand to me.

"I am so sorry for you, so sorry. Do try and be a man, a man who has more than strength and muscle. And—and—do not be offended at my solicitude—pray, pray often." She had almost entered the hall, but stepped back again and whispered, "I will pray for you to-night."

Pray! I can imagine the sneer which surely settled on my face. The name of the Divinity had been used by me daily. But in what manner! Before I reached my teens I was past master of the art of profanity, and my skill in cursing increased as I grew older. And now she had counselled me to pray, to use in reverence the name which had no meaning to me and slipped glibly from my lips at the slightest provocation. Why, it was ridiculous—but was it so very ridiculous?

The two arch enemies began a fierce battle within me. Without any trouble can I remember my walk to Chatham Square that night. Sometimes I halted, leaned up against a lamp post and said: "By Heavens, I think there's a great deal of truth in what she said!" Buoyed up by this assurance I would start afresh, would walk half a block and then

again halt to listen to the other voice, which whispered: "Fool, don't listen to women's talk. You are somebody. You are known and feared, and wouldn't be that if you were a goody-goody."

Many men are only feared, while they believe themselves to be respected. That is how it was with me, and that is why my "other" voice did not say "respected," but "feared."

The battle was waged within me until I was almost at Chatham Square. And then a strange thing came to pass. Mike Callahan's place was on the western side of the square. I had come down on that side, but, when on the corner of the square, I deliberately crossed over to the eastern sidewalk, and, from there, surveyed my camping ground.

I stood and looked at the flashily illuminated front of Mike Callahan's dive and wavered between the old-rooted and the new-come influences. It would have been laughable had it not been so pitiful.

Just think, a man, supposedly intelligent and mature, considering himself the martyr of martyrs if he had to forego the "pleasures" of Callahan's dive for one precious night.

The new-come influence was a potent one, yet it was so strange, so inexplicable to me that I could have refused to heed it and would have let my old inclinations persuade me, had I not thought of my

good old Bill. The importance of my recent adventure had driven my partner temporarily from my mind. But now I thought of him, remembered that he had been subjected to a long fast by my carelessness and hurried to the attic to make up for my negligence. I found him as expectant and philosophical as ever, and watched him with languid interest while he was munching the scraps I had saved for him. Then it occurred to me that Bill had been deprived of his customary walk with me and had not had a breath of fresh air all day. It also rankled in my mind what she had said about the parks and the Brooklyn Bridge, and, lo and behold, Bill and I found ourselves in the street, bound for City Hall Park, like two eminently respectable citizens intent on getting a little air.

I consoled myself for this evident display of weakness by emphatically resolving to return to Callahan's as soon as Bill should have had his fill of fresh air.

We were comparative strangers to City Hall Park. Every foot of the park and the sidewalks about it had been traveled by my bare feet many years ago, but never had I looked on the leafed oasis in the light of a recreation ground.

We felt a trifle out of place, and, most likely on that account chose the most secluded and unob-

served spot for our experimental siesta. The rear stoop of the City Hall, facing the County Court House, was in deep shadow, and there we seated ourselves to test how it felt to be there just to rest.

It gradually began to dawn on us that City Hall Park was almost as interesting as the sidewalk in front of Mike Callahan's dive on Chatham Square. A perpetual stream of people crossed our view on their way to and from the Brooklyn Bridge and to and from the Jersey ferries. Very few of them walked leisurely. Most of them seemed in a hurry and all seemed to have a definite purpose. Bill and I were the only two without a purpose.

Ah, no, it is wrong for me to say that. Let me speak only for myself. Bill had a purpose, and a noble one.

My thoughts ran oddly that night. I looked around and saw the people on the benches. Then, as now, the majority of the seats were occupied by homeless men, by "has-beens."

"Well, I am surely better than those tramps," I assured myself with self-satisfied smirk.

Was I better than those tramps? The newer voice gave me the answer. These tramps, useless now, had once been useful, had once worked and earned, but I, almost thirty years of age, couldn't call one day in my life well spent.

The Beginning of the Miracle.

It was a wondrous night to us, this night in the shadow of City Hall Park. It was the first night I had given to thought, and found myself at my true estimate. Saints are not made in a day, and I was still hard and callous, but, after my introspection, a feeling took possession of me which very much resembled shame. Instead of returning the way we had come, via Chatham street—now called Park Row—we wandered home by the way of Centre street. We passed the Tombs, the sinister prison for the city's offenders, and Bill and I looked at it musingly. There were many in the cells who were known by me. Many in them could justly call me their accomplice, because I had willingly spent their money with them, knowing, or, at least, suspecting, how it had been gotten. And how long would it be before a cell in there would be but a way station for me before taking the long journey "up the river"?

The mere suggestion of it was shivery and I remarked to Bill that our attic, no matter how humble, was preferable to a sojourn at Sing-Sing.

Then an inspiration came to me, and, to this very day I am making myself believe it came from old Bill. Most likely I am a fool for doing it, but I want to have my old pal have his full share of credit in my reincarnation. The inspiration was: "Why not try and stay in my attic in preference to going

to Sing-Sing?" To this came an augmentation: "If able to keep away from the road that leads to prison, it may not always be necessary to stay in an attic. There are more nicely furnished rooms in the city than your cubby-hole on the top floor, friend Kildare."

How can I now, at this long range, analyze my feelings of that critical night? I would have to perform a psychic wonder, and I am not that kind of a magician. But I did not go back to Callahan's, and have never been there since as a participant in the slimy festivities.

Up in our attic Bill and I gave ourselves up to much mutual scrutiny. Some outward change in me must have been noticeable, for Bill watched me most critically.

The one thing I remember best of all the little incidents which left their clear impressions on my mind was my first attempt at praying.

Bill laid in his usual place at the foot of my bed, and I was stretched on my back, gazing into the ceiling and overcoming my astonishment at being in bed at such an unearthly early hour by going over the events of the day. I lingered longest at the scene at her door and tried to laugh when my train brought me to her advice to pray. Somehow the laugh was not sincere, and, instead of being able to

continue my mind's recital, I could not get away from her admonition.

That was not all. A soliloquy ensued and ended with the result of giving prayer a chance to prove itself. Why not? It did not cost anything, might do some good after all, and, besides, it would be interesting to note how it felt to pray.

I prayed, and you will not accuse me of irreverence when I make the statement that my prayer was certainly one of the funniest that ever rolled on to the Father's throne. It was hardly a prayer. The "thou" and "thee" and "thy" were sadly missing. I did not think or ask with faith. Quite the reverse. I frankly avowed my skepticism. The substance of it was that I had been told God could do much, everything. The one who had told me this possessed my greatest respect, yet was only a little girl and not as experienced as I, and, perhaps, fooled. So, if God wanted me to believe in Him, He would have to give me conclusive proof right away or else lose a follower. It was a heart-to-heart talk of the most informal kind and—are they not the best prayers?

I said quite coolly that I had been told I wasn't as much of a man as I had thought myself to be and that there was a much better life than the one I had led. Well, I was willing to try it, and, if I

really liked the newer life better than the old one, I promised to stick as closely to God as I had stuck to all that was evil before.

One should not bargain with the Creator, but I am sure that on the Judgment Day my God will find extenuating circumstances. As for the bargain made that night, both parties have lived up to it.

THE OLD DOORS CLOSED.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OLD DOORS CLOSED.

Sober to bed and sober out of it was an uncommon experience and I felt embarrassed by the unwonted sensation. Happily I found some money in my pocket and that deprived me of the excuse to my conscience that I must go to Callahan's so as to get my breakfast money. How we ate that morning, Bill and I, and how we relished our breakfast. Yes, I had a drink, a big drink of whiskey, but not because I had forgotten my resolve of the night before, but because I was yet ignorant. To be quite frank, I have always been a bit cynical about these sudden conversions of confirmed drunkards.

Not long ago I met a man at a rescue mission where I frequently attend, who, as we say on the Bowery, "eats whiskey" and almost subsists on it. He was homeless, or rather bedless, his home being forfeited long ago, and received his "bed ticket" from the missionary after his confession of salvation. I happened to meet him on the following day

and his breath was strong with the perfume of cloves. He told me he liked to chew them, which is rather an odd hobby.

Far be it from me to slander any one, yet the perfume of cloves can hide a multitude of aromas.

Sublime is the aim of the rescue missions, but how and whether they accomplish this aim is another story, which we might discuss at some future time.

Another habit, which also still clung to me, was my late rising. It was noon before Bill and I appeared on the street on our way to the restaurant. After breakfast we walked over to City Hall Park, looked gravely and wisely at the spot where we had sat the night before, and then we permitted ourselves the luxury of a day dream.

Dreams are funny fellows, always playing pranks. This dream kept me embraced until I found myself in the immediate neighborhood of the school where a certain little professor was engaged in leading the infantile mind through the labyrinth of the A, B, C's.

Soon they began to stumble out with noisy, natural, healthy laughter and hubbub, and the dingy street became one long, squirming stream of babbling children. I could not help looking back on my boyish years and tried to imagine how it would feel to have your slate and books under your arm.

There were many youngsters before me and I kept staring at them to draw the picture in my mind's eye of how I would have looked coming from school, my school.

At last she came!

As I saw the little tots, her pupils, cling to her skirts from very love of her, I felt a light, an oriflamme, within my breast, and knew that I would have to fight a harder fight than ever before; that I would have to conquer myself before I would dare to touch the hem of her skirt as those children. And he who fights, fights best when in the sight of an inspiring emblem. So then I took my sailing flag and nailed it to the mast of purity. It has withstood all sorts of weather. Sometimes it droops, again it flies defiantly. But, whatever, it is still safely on the mast and will stay there until I strike my colors for the last dipping to my God above.

I crossed the street and put myself in her way so that she could not help seeing me.

"Oh, Mr. Kildare!"

She remembered my name.

It is impossible for me to recall how I acted at this meeting. However, I consider it very fortunate that no camera fiend took a snapshot at me. The human document which would have evolved from it would certainly be very embarrassing to me.

Still, lout, churl as I was, it was the first time in my life that I spoke to a girl without even the shadow of an ulterior or impure motif, and some of my want of politeness may be forgiven on that account.

If I cannot recollect my behavior during that scene, I can correctly recollect my feelings. I was in a turmoil. Her face showed real, unaffected pleasure on seeing me, and that to me, if you will understand my social position then—was an incomparable boon. If people, the good, well intending people, would only realize that the hardest heart is very often the most ready to respond to genuine kindness and that, usually, it is only hard, because, through life, it had to be satisfied with the stereotyped prating which passes as a message from our all-loving and loving-all God!

Knowing the awkward propensities of my limbs and arms, it does not surprise me in the least that I stood there shuffling and wobbling, and never noticing the little hand held out to me in truest greeting.

She greeted me kindly, in evident surprise.

Most gingerly I took her dainty hand into my big, brawny paw. She spoke of the "chance meeting." Since then I have often felt certain that when I said "chance meeting," a twinkle danced for the time of a breath in her eyes. Afterward, I often accused her of it and was severely squelched for my presumption.

Yet, yes, she was an angel, but also very much of a woman, and, between you and me, there are times when a true, little woman with staunch heart, level head and unwavering faith is of more practical benefit to a rough, big fellow like me than the angel who wouldn't dare take a chance of spoiling those snowy garments or to let the harp remain untwanged for a few moments.

Being more unfamiliar with etiquette than I am now, I had no little white lie ready, but blurted out that I had come there for the express purpose of seeing her. She seemed a trifle annoyed at this and I hastened to explain that I was there to see her home, so that she would not have to run the risk of being insulted again. When she learned this determination of mine to act henceforth as her body guard, she chided at first, declared it absolutely unnecessary, but then laughed, and told me it was very kind of me.

And all this time I was playing a part and, as I thought, so perfectly that she could not penetrate my disguise. But she could not be deceived. She quickly saw through my pretense of wishing to appear a fairly considerate man of the world, who, not having anything better to do, would do a chivalrous act merely for the sake of killing some of his

superfluous time. The only wonder is that she permitted me to bother her.

Then, though no daisies or roses garlanded our path and though we walked along the crowded, not too clean, sidewalks in the precincts of the poor, began walks that one could turn into poetry, but which I cannot do, not having the essential gift of expression. All I could do in return for being permitted to be beside her was to devote myself entirely to the task of protecting her. Protect her against what?

You know the most glorious thing about love is that it is no respecter of persons. To rich and poor it comes alike; here to be received in passion and impurity, there to be welcomed in a better spirit and to be nested in an ever-loyal heart. But the bad thing about love is that it makes us lose our proper respect for truth. In short, it makes splendid liars out of us.

Where is there the young man who has not told her whom he adored that her eyes made the most brilliant star look like a tallow candle, or that her cheeks were as peaches?

In the same way did I magnify my knightly duty to myself. Surely the dangers along the journey to her home were trifling and few, but, thanks to my love-stirred imagination, I felt as serious as a

plumed knight, and no proud queen in days of sword and lance had more devoted cavalier to fight, die or live for her. That now became my sole duty, and with such duty, to serve the best and truest, a man must grow better even in spite of himself.

Every day, rain or shine, I waited on the corner above the school to serve as permanent escort. Every day she told me it was not necessary to see her home, yet, every day she permitted me to do so. When one arrives in a strange land the smaller details are often not noticed, and, afterward, you can only re-see the grander pictures. I cannot tell you how and why the turns in our conversations occurred, but I can remember certain bits of talk and questions, very important to both of us.

For instance, on our third meeting she asked me if I were still one of Mike Callahan's ornamental fixtures. I felt then, as many of us have felt before and will feel again; I was ashamed to admit that I had severed my connection with the gang and had not been there since the night I had taken her home. You see, I still considered myself a "red-hot sport," and did not care to be identified with anything that was goody-goody. Since then I have learned that it is quite the thing among certain sets to speak lightly of one's religion and to laugh at being found out as an occasional church-goer.

It makes such a rakish impression to intimate you are "really devilish."

So, to her question, I did not give a straightforward answer, but hummed and hawed and—lied.

"No, I ain't been there the last two nights, because —because, I wasn't feeling any too good, and—and, oh, yes, one night I went up to a show."

The greatest lies can be compressed into the smallest parcels, yet they always weigh the same.

She had a way of letting me know when my lies were too transparent. It was not what she said, but how she looked when she said it.

In reality I had stood away from Callahan's because I had taken a dislike to the place and everybody in it, but, of course, it would have never done to tell that to a little slip of a girl.

Apparently my explanation was not taken at its face value, for she merely said: "Oh, I see." Barely a second later she added: "Oh, I'm so glad."

The intuition of women is certainly wonderful. Even such an accomplished diplomat as myself was floored on the spot by a little girl.

Well, the days wore on, and our walks became to me walks in an unknown realm. Her little casual references to mother, brother, home, friends and daily work gave me a vista of a life not even imagined by me. To live as she, in well-regulated house-

hold and according to well-ordained schedule, had never been desired by me and, therefore, never been considered by me.

"If that kind of life turns out such fine little women, it can't be so bad after all, and may be worth trying," was my train of reasoning, and a dull but positive desire to try that sort of life began to rankle in my soul.

While I was engaged in these musings, she did not keep entirely quiet, but put me through the most severe kind of civil service. I had to answer so many questions—and truthfully, too, as she could tell a fabrication immediately—until I honestly believe every hour of my life was covered. The finish of it all was that I was made the subject of several of the most scathing lectures ever delivered. Those sermons fairly made my blood boil, and often, under my breath, I wished she were a man, that I could close the lecturing for good and all with a blow.

It is simply awful how impudent little people—and especially women—are. And the worst of it is that we big fellows have to stand it from them.

She had a peculiarly direct way of getting at things and never minced matters. The effect of it was that I began to shrink into myself

A leering knave, I had stood on the pinnacle of

wickedness; had grinned and sneered at decency, manhood and womanhood; had thought myself a "somebody" because the laws of God and man were unregarded by me, and because a chorus of fools and friends had always shouted an amen to my deeds, and now—now I awoke to the pitiful fact that I was not only a "nobody," but a despicable, contemptible thing, without the least of claims to the grandest title—man.

Yes, there was no denying the fact, the "somebody" had fallen, sadly fallen from his horse, and all his house of cards had been knocked into smithereens by a little bit of a schoolma'am.

A KINDERGARTEN OF ONE.

CHAPTER XV.

A KINDERGARTEN OF ONE.

KEEPING away from Callahan's and from the sinister harvest which was often reaped there, had a depressing effect on my income. For a comparatively long time I lived on a few dollars, which came to me from outstanding loans, now determinedly collected. I learned then that if one keeps away from Callahan's and places like it, one can subsist on a remarkably small income. As it had been with me, it was always a case of "getting it easy and spending it easy."

My expenses became the object of much thinking and figuring. So much for room rent, so much for meals, including Bill's fare, and so much for shaves and incidentals were estimated at the lowest minimum and so as to last the longest until something should turn up. This something did not fail to turn up.

When the funds became dangerously low, I be-

thought myself of some of my swell friends, who had often evinced a desire to have me "train" them or keep them in condition. These propositions had been so frequent as to make me think that to be rich included being rich in ailments.

Some wanted me to make them thin, others desired more flesh to cover their bones, and they all came to me, I being such an authority on anatomy and physiology!

I communicated with many of these ailing swells and ere long made a fairly good living by my physical culture lessons. There is a heavy cloud on my conscience that on my balance-sheet a score of offenses are recorded against me in connection with the furtherance of my physical culture system. A frank confession is good for the soul, and I might as well confess right here that, only too frequently, I prescribed the identically same course for fat and lean.

This calling of mine was not without humor. I remember a "patient" who was troubled with too much embonpoint. He did not believe in the prescriptions of his physician, but rather preferred the physical culture system of "Professor" Kildare. He was a man of much weight in public affairs and in flesh. About 250 pounds in the flesh, if I remember right.

He lived in the immediate neighborhood of Madison Square, and for a long succession of many mornings a select audience, including several newsboys, a few policemen and myself, had the edifying spectacle of seeing these 250 absolutely-refusing-to-melt pounds chase around the square like mad at 5 A. M.

I do not think it did him very much harm and it did the audience an awful lot of good, if you will take laughter as an indication of increasing health.

No fear of want or need threatening me, I gave myself completely up to peeping into the better life. I fairly revelled in my new experience, and dreams by day and night were my only territory.

A few weeks of this and then a crisis came.

We had reached her house from our customary walk from the school. I had taken leave and had already taken a few steps, when she called me back.

"Mr. Kildare, I forgot something."

I was quickly back to the door waiting to hear what she had forgotten.

She took a small card from her bag and handed it to me.

"Mr. Kildare, you have been very kind and considerate and I would like to show you that I appreciate it. I am afraid you will find it rather tame, but I hope you will come."

I twirled the card between my fingers and without looking at it asked: "What is it?"

"Why, just a little social entertainment of our church."

"When and where does it take place?" I still kept on asking.

"I am not quite sure as to the date, but the card will tell you."

As it was said, I could do no less than refer to the card. Whether I held the card upside down or what I did, I do not know, but my secret was out and nothing could hide it any longer.

There I stood, to all appearances a man, intelligent and able-bodied, and not able to cipher or decipher even my own name.

I felt all go away from me. My fairy palace of bliss crumbled to pieces. What else could I do but slink away, to hide myself, my ignorance, my shame forever?

Why prolong the agony of this torturing moment?

I turned quickly without a word, intending to return to the dark "whence" from which I had come.

But before I had taken a step a little hand grasped my arm, and then and there took up its faithful guidance of me, and every fibre of my big, ungainly frame thrilled at this waking of the better life.

The memory of the following months—yes, years

—but for the tingeing sadness would be a bit of most laughable humor.

The work of my little schoolma'am became doubled. Besides her class at school she saddled herself with this unwieldy, husky kindergarten of one. I know many youngsters—God bless them!—who like their school and studies, but they were not in it with me in the drilling of my A, B, C's. Never was the alphabet more quickly mastered. In a surprisingly short time "c-a-t, cat," and "r-a-t, rat," were spelled by me with the facility of a primary scholar.

Who would not have learned quickly with such a teacher?

My good old Bill did not fail to note this educational process and was sorely puzzled at it.

Our attic became a study; the washstand a student's desk, with a big, ungainly head bent close to a smoking oil lamp.

How I pored over my private lessons!

The pen in cramped fingers would trace those tantalizing letters, while the lips gruffly murmured the spelling. Naturally, arithmetic was also included in my curriculum, and often Bill had flung at him the maddening puzzle: "Seven into thirty-five goes how many times—yes, how many times?"

Bill always sat beside me during my studies and blinked a hundred questions at me.

"Say, Kil, what are you up to now? I am afraid it is some new sort of tomfoolery. If not, why can't I do it, too?"

I often answered and explained, but the situation was not fully grasped by my old pal until he met my teacher. And then? Why the rocks, the hillsides, trees and birds and flowers were all responsive to that little sprite, and Bill, in just one glance, saw that the fairy of our destinies had but begun her miracle of love.

But even dolls can be made to talk ,and parrots can imitate empty chatter. My teacher wanted me to have the means to lift myself out of my ditch. The little sculptor who was moulding this huge mass of the commonest clay into the semblance of a man wanted to waken that in me which would make me something apart from the thing I had been. Coming out of blackest darkness I was not led at once into the radius of the dazzling light, but, as with the tots in her class at school, she coached me, step by step, into the way of righteous intelligence.

Gradually I began to see—to see with the eyes of my soul—and I found a great world about me abounding in the evidences of an almighty and wise Creator. I began to understand and love this newer and better life, and began to hate the old life, which often tried to tempt me back to it.

Our lessons were carried on with much inconvenience and difficulty. The distance from school to home was little more than ten blocks, and during the time it took us to walk that length I had to report my lesson and to receive instructions for additional study. The inconvenience of this method was not at all conducive to learning, and one day I was asked by my teacher to come to her house to receive my lesson there.

I could hardly believe mine own ears. I was to see the very place in which she lived. It was beyond belief. Was it not a sacrifice on her part? Indeed it was, and I can never sufficiently emphasize the many sacrifices this sweet little girl underwent for me from the beginning to the very end.

Let us understand her position.

Marie Deering was the sole support of her mother and a young invalid brother. Besides these two she had only one other relative, an elder brother in a far western city. The father, a retired captain of engineers in the British army, had come to America to dispose of several inventions. Whatever the value of these inventions, the captain knew little of the ways of business and commerce, and soon found himself minus his inventions and balance of his savings. Disappointment and failing health combined

to shorten his days, and the little family found themselves fatherless.

The burden to provide fell then on the shoulders of the daughter, and that, as all her other burdens, was borne with a fortitude worthy of a saint in heaven.

It goes without saying that the Deerings were refined people, and you can imagine what it meant to them to have a big, uncouth fellow intrude into their home circle. I shall never forget the horror-stricken countenance of Mrs. Deering when I appeared for my first lesson. It needed no interpreter to read the question in her eyes: "For goodness' sake, where did this come from, and what is it?"

But I immediately found a dear little ally in my teacher's invalid brother, who quickly discovered me a willing horse for many a wild and hazardous canter from kitchen to parlor.

This first glance into real home life fairly upset me. Since then I have seen many more luxurious places, but none where my heart felt so much at home. I noticed everything—the neatness, the taste of the modest decorations—and I set my teeth and said: "I, too, will have a home, a real home, and, perhaps, not only for myself, but——"

Ah, it was too early to dream that far.

To dream of things will never bring them. People who had known me had always given me credit for stubborn determination in wicked pursuits. I resolved to test the strength of my determination by applying it to a better end.

As soon as my mentor ascertained that my income came from practising my uniform system of physical culture, of which the only beneficiary was the inventor and professor, she counselled against it and told me to cease it.

This brought me face to face with my most novel experience. I looked for work—good, honest, hard work.

My luck surprised me.

Only a few months had passed since the beginning of my transformation, but it had been noticed by men whom I had thought indifferent to my fate.

I can say, with all the conviction possible, that, if a man determines without compromise to do right, he will find friends, all willing to help along, among those he had expected to be nothing more than mere acquaintances. And another thing. I also claim—and it has never disproven itself to me—that the man who really wants to work can always find it, friends or no friends. The rub is that "suitable" work cannot always be found so easily. It is this lack of "suitable" work which sends men to Bowery lodg-

ing-houses, there to keep themselves in high collars and cuffs by begging instead of soiling their tender hands by the first work offered to them.

I started out to do my hustling turn and had no trouble in finding work. Happily it was of the—to me—"suitable" kind.

I went to work at one of the steamboat piers as a baggageman—sometimes lovingly referred to as a "baggage-smasher." The wages were eight dollars a week, and that was a smaller amount than I had often "earned" in one night while employed in the dives.

On my first pay day, those eight dollars were recounted by me innumerable times, not because I was dissatisfied with the smallness of the amount, but because I felt good, really good, at having at length earned a week's wages by honest toil. Every one of those bills had its own meaning for me.

My teacher knew of my new employment, and, with my first pay I bought a little gift for her. It also gave me a pretext for explaining to her my future plans.

Much of her time had been taken up with me, and I owed all of my new life to her endeavor. Persistently she claimed that all her efforts were only a small return for the favor done for her by me, and that, besides, it was her duty to help me to gain a

foothold on my new road of life. This argument failed to convince me, as my favor amounted to nothing, and I understood without difficutly that all the benefit I received from her unceasing toil with me was inspired by nothing else than the sweet, Christian spirit which ruled everyone of her actions. I insisted that it would have been an imposition for me to be a trouble and bother to her any longer, especially when I had steady employment, which afforded me the time and means to attend evening schools and to study at home in spare hours. I wanted to thank her, and not be quite so conspicuous where, because of social differences, I felt I did not belong.

I mentioned something about coming from the gutter. As always, she had an answer, and a flattering one, ready. As to coming from the gutter, she expostulated, why, many a coin is dropped there and remains until some one picks it up and, by a little polishing, makes it as good as it ever was.

It was just like her. She always claimed to have found in me something good, something I could never have discovered. On the other hand, as soon as we resumed the lessons, she found that quite often her pupil could be severely trying.

It was the harrowing science of arithmetic which caused the most trouble, and even to this day—but

that is a different story. I had a confirmed habit of becoming hopelessly muddled in my multiplication table. When floundering in the numerical labyrinth I would hear just the faintest little sigh, and, looking up, would see a dear little forehead showing the most cunning wrinkles of resignation. It was then that horrid wickedness would take possession of me, and I would intentionally make more mistakes just to see those eyes reproach me for my stupidity. I would also make errors in my spelling and reading to have the pleasure of being chided in her modulated voice.

My course of education had now run on for months and the beginning of winter gave us the chance to elaborate it. The free lectures of the Board of Education were a boon quickly taken advantage of by us. Almost every night we went to Cooper Union or some public school where an interesting lecture was announced. To be sure I was not at first a howling success as an attendant. I could stand the illustrated lectures, but astronomy and political economy without pictures always produced the lullaby effect on me, and I was often on the verge of snoring. All this disappointed my professor, but did not discourage her.

Summer came and my knowledge of botany was destined to be enriched. Strange are the paradoxes

of fate. No class loves flowers as much as the poor, and no class has less of them than they. Ah, it is pitiful, I tell you, to wander through the streets inhabited by my people, and to see never a patch of green, a fragrant oasis, in this stretch of barren, joyless materialism. There is no time there for flowers, where even the cabbages in front of the dingy grocery stores look withered and seared, and where there is no other watchword than, "Work, work, or we will be homeless and starving." That one thought rules the brains of my fellows with an iron grasp. With the close of their daily toil their day's worry is not over. Listen to the talks on the stoops and in the doorways of the tenements and you will be the witness of much fretting. Often all this mind's botheration is not necessary. There is no actual want, no threatening danger of it. Yet, the poor find a gruesome pleasure in dwelling in the midst of their horrors, and the roll of their organ of misery churns along on an endless chain.

And I believe that this is so because the child life of the East Side is dwarfed and deprived of all that is dear to a child's natural desires. Every year brings improvements. Men and women with hearts of gold are working like Trojans among the children of the poor, and the harder they work the more are they appreciated by their charges. I cannot rid my-

self of the opinion that in the aiding of the children lies the only solution of our social troubles. Teach them to be natural—a difficult feat, to swing themselves above their level in intellect and not by imitating the modes and fashions of the idle rich in the shoddy fabrics offered to them by unscrupulous dealers, and we will have advanced miles nearer to the goal which is desired by all who love their fellow men, not with mushy sentiment, but with intelligence.

Still, in spite of all that is done, the yearning look in the eyes of the children is still there, and I would not care to have the heart of the man who can see the unspoken wish in the childish gaze when beholding a flower, no matter how scraggy, and then laugh at it as at a freak of humor.

My acquaintance with the denizens of the kingdom of flowers was exceedingly limited. My teacher had noticed this and forthwith set to work to remedy this other defect in my education.

As early as May did we begin our out-of-door course. We did it by means of excursions. I did not care to have this arrangement all one-sided and we agreed to change off in the management of our personally conducted tours. We both had to work during the week and could only indulge in our excursions on Sundays. So, on one outing she would

be the supreme director and dictator; I, on the next.

Candor compels me to confess that my outings always led us dangerously near to Coney Island, if not quite to it, yet, people can enjoy themselves even there, for it is the same old ocean, and the same sea air there as elsewhere, and it only lies with the visitor how to spend the holiday.

On her Sundays I was always kept in the dark as to our destination until we reached it. It invariably proved to be some quiet country place, with nooks and brooks and all the charming props which set the stage of nature with tranquil loveliness. After depositing the luncheon in some shady spot, the professor would trip from flower to flower, from tree to tree, and deliver little sermons on birds, flowers and minerals. There is no schoolroom like God's own nature, and in a way which I cannot describe to you, I learned that there was a life abounding in purity, in the understanding of things, and based in the wisdom of a wise Father. Step by step my faithful teacher led me on, until there was no doubt travailing me, until I could stand in street, or field, or forest, and feel my soul, my own undying soul.

There never were other days like these and, surely, there never will be again.

We had then known one another for a long time. I had become capable of reasoning, and had grave cause for doing so. Was it all for the best? Will it surprise you to know that constant companionship with my mentor had awakened in me thoughts very foreign to grammar and arithmetic?

I loved her. I knew it, but I also felt that that love was doomed to be buried unsatisfied. A cat may look at a queen, but that is about all a cat may presume to do.

That is what my reason told me, but in my heart there echoed a stirring hymn of fondest hope. It would not let me rest, and I became a pestering nuisance to my teacher. Many times daily would I ask her the questions, "Why, why do you undergo this ceaseless labor—why do you set yourself this gigantic task of making of me a man?"

As in all other matters, I was rough and uncouth in my annoying questioning, and an answer to it was long refused. But my bulldog tenacity came to my aid and I would not let go. Determination will overcome a good many things, and surely a little school teacher. I need not tell you how it happened—you either know, or will know it yourself—but one day we understood the question and the answer.

Then life for us became a blessed thing indeed.

For the first time in my life I was supremely happy. I cannot tell you how my little girl felt, but can give a very strong guess at it, for my sweetheart never wavered, never failed me, and was my very own until the very last.

My Mamie Rose, my bride, my dearest friend, my all.

It took me a long time to fully grasp that she had really said "Yes," to the ever-important question, but, as soon as I was quite sure of it, I assumed the grand airs of proprietorship new swains usually assume.

First of all I exerted my prerogative of calling her by her first name.

Although long under her tutelage and exposed to her refining influence, I was by no means, very polished, and still harbored many prejudices against customs and usages not common to the social shift from which I had sprung. The nomenclature of my people is very limited. Only a very small choice of male and female baptismal names is resorted to by tenement house folk. John, James, Michael, Patrick, Henry, George, Charles are the most used male names; Maggie, Sadie, Susie, Lizzie, Nellie and Mamie are the favorite female names, or, at least, the favorite abbreviations of the names.

The name, Marie R. Deering, sounded a trifle too

fashionable, too "toney," to me, and I proceeded to acclimatize it.

"Mamie" is the abbreviation or substitute for "Marie," so my little girl was immediately dubbed "Mamie."

The "R."—the initial of her middle name, stood for Rosetta, and it was decidedly against the code of ethics of the Fourth Ward for any one to be burdened by such an enormity. Again I officiated at the imaginary baptismal font, and "Rosetta" became a plain "Rose," sweet to me as no other.

Let no one think for a moment that my changing of names was accomplished without opposition. Besides other things, little people also possess the virtue of stubbornness, and many were the arguments pro and con. I was told with most charming emphasis that I could shout "Mamie Rose" to the winds, but that she, Marie R. Deering, would never —no, never—answer to that name. But, you know the old saying about many little drops of water penetrating the surface of the hardest stone, and the same was true in this case. Also, it should not be forgotten that she, my Mamie Rose, was of English descent, I was of Irish stock, and it is in Ireland where the Blarney stone is, which same instils a wonderful magic in the love-making of every descendant of good Erin's folk.

We had barely sealed the compact of our love when I received a fearful shock. My Mamie Rose wanted me to inform her mother concerning what had happened.

Mrs. Deering and myself had become very good friends. On several occasions she had even been my fellow-conspirator, by helping me to solve some weird puzzles in multiplication, imposed on me by her daughter. I had often sat at her table and had spent many hours, made pleasant by her, in the cosy home. However, all this did not seem sufficient to screw my courage up to the required pitch. Many particularly ticklish situations in my past life had been met by me without flinching, but I actually trembled when I was obliged to face this sweet lady with my portentous information and request.

If I had trembled with fear before telling her, I trembled with joy after it.

I could hardly believe my senses when I did not hear one word of regret or reproach from her lips. And when she said quietly, and, therefore, most impressively: "I have no fear for Marie's future," I became her bonded slave right on the spot, and hold myself in bondage to her to this very day.

Richard, my brave, crippled Dick—my "other" pal—was most effusive in his congratulations, but,

he admitted to me his was a selfish reason, for now I was his big brother in "dead earnest."

Naturally, all this gave me an increased impetus to earn more money, and I put so much zeal into my work that my wages were several times increased. Nevertheless, I was still nothing more or less than a "baggage smasher." However, all of it, courtship and the rest, was so entirely out of the ordinary that a little thing like this did not cause us any worry. And if one happens to be a "baggage-smasher," it does not follow that one must always remain one. Besides, the queen did not mind it, and as to the cat, well—there is no use in talking to you if you cannot imagine what the cat thought about it.

AMBASSADOR BILL

CHAPTER XVI.

AMBASSADOR BILL.

One who has been somewhat neglected in the few preceding pages is my old pal, my Bill. His soul, heart, instinct, call it what you will, was undergoing severe trials.

Mamie Rose was the cause of it.

With her coming into our lives, she sowed the seed of jealousy between me and Bill.

Bill found a new joy in trotting beside my teacher at times when he should have been at my side. He seemed the proudest dog in all the world and hardly deigned to notice me.

This I resented.

On the other hand, at times when Mamie Rose and I would sit close together, Bill could not rest until, with all his mighty prowess, he had squirmed himself between us.

For a long time he did not know whom of his two friends he should love the best. But, with coming weeks and months, he decided to share his affec-

tion evenly, and then we understood one another's feelings and respected our relative positions.

Would that I could take a peep into Bill's doggish brain and read the memory of those heavenly days!

A man who is born to coarseness and brutality will sometimes lose control of his acquired attainments. There came a day, long forgiven and forgotten by her, but not yet sufficiently atoned by me, when I permitted the subdued brute within me to assert itself for one brief moment. I saw immediately what I had done, and realized that my rowdyism could not be forgiven.

Then was a lapse in deepest shadows. Regrets, reproaches, self-accusations—what good were they? They could not lead me back to paradise. The room became a place of silent brooding, and not as regularly shared by Bill as formerly. Bill had taken no part in our estrangement. Emotional dog as he was, he never forgot to take care of the inner dog whenever an opportunity presented itself. From the very beginning he had industriously cultivated the acquaintance of my little girl's mother. First, becomingly modest, he had, in the course of time, insisted on being a regular guest at the dinner-table. I meant to break him of this habit, but the mother told me in confidence that Bill had whispered to her, quite plainly: "I think you are the very best

cook in the world." Few women can resist such a compliment.

For two long days I had not seen her—had not heard her voice. She lived just around the corner, and, from the window of my tenement, I could see the walls that sheltered my treasure, that I thought forever lost. I sat and sat and stared at the cruel bricks that seemed to cry, "Halt!" Small wonder that the lesser things of life had lost their importance to me! Even Bill had, for the nonce, but little space in my thoughts; but he lost no time in bringing himself most forcibly to my notice.

I was at the window, and the door was slightly ajar. All was quiet, very quiet, until a slow patter on the stairs told of my partner's home-coming. My most casual glance was his share on entering the room. He was very anxious to avail himself of this, and made quickly for the sheltering shadows under the bed. But my careless glance had quickly changed to one of concern on beholding him, and, after much coaxing, he crawled out to face me.

My valiant knight had met his conqueror. The hero of many a battle sat wounded and bandaged before me. His left eye was swathed in linen. He tried to pass over the matter lightly; he wagged his tail, but only once, for that, too, was bandaged. Then he threw himself on my mercy.

It behooved me, as his partner, to investigate the extent of the damage, and I carefully untied the bandage that covered his eye. It was only a trifling scratch, suspiciously like one made by a cat. I also noticed that his badge of honor—his collar—was missing. On the point of throwing aside the bandage, a handkerchief, my eye fell on a well-known monogram in its corner, and—I cannot exactly recall how it happened—but, in the very next minute, my Bill and I were descending the rickety stairs, two steps at a time.

Just as we turned the corner, a belligerent-looking tabby made herself exceedingly conspicuous. Somehow, Bill found the other side of the street preferable. At her door he joined me again, and my queen's ambassador led the way upstairs.

There I stood before her, and stammered uncouth phrases of apology. I mentioned Bill's collar. A dainty hand took it from the mantel and handed it to me; our fingers met and—all the world was singing again the sweet refrain which for days had been silent. The impudence of that dog beggars all description. He had the unblushing nerve to claim all the credit for having brought love's jangle into tune again, and, in his excitement, rapped his damaged caudal appendage three times on the floor before he tried to bite it.

Then our happiness began once more.

MY DÉBUT IN SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XVII.

MY DÉBUT IN SOCIETY.

Had our future plans depended on my inclinations, or rather my impulses, our wedding would have taken place very soon after our engagement. All I deemed necessary to insure our future happiness was our love. All else was of no importance. Now I know that her judgment was the better.

I had sense enough to admit her wisdom. I was still very much entangled in the forest of ignorance. It could not have been right for me to force myself on her, refined and cultured as she was—until, at least approximately I was on the same level. I had still much, very much, to learn before considering myself capable to class myself with the non-illiterate. There were years of study before me, yet, with such a prize dancing before me, I threw myself into my task with true enthusiasm.

So, though I often grumbled at my fate, I fully understood that it would be many moons before I

could justly say to my Mamie Rose: "Now I am ready."

We were both human. Sometimes, perhaps, in the hour when the homing of the sun had come and when the golden wings were folded for the rest of one more night, we, Mamie Rose and I, in field or rural quiet, felt the intoned, unison song of our hearts, which sung to us that we were one, a unit, and not two different personalities, and then we often came very near to throwing aside all previous sagacious resolves and felt ourselves fired by the desire to end to-morrow this two-fold existence. These periods never lasted long. The morrow came and whispered: "Fools," and we forgot the swerving from our intentions, in hard work.

Since that time I have had many days of very hard labor, but I never worked as I did then. Corporations are not in the habit of paying liberal salaries unless every cent of them is earned by the sweat of your brow. For one in my humble position I was receiving exceedingly high wages—and, to be candid, I had to earn them by my sweat. Often I was given an opportunity to work "over time" at extra pay. It was always welcome, because it meant so much more added to my deposit in the Savings Bank, but it simply "played me out."

From the pier I would hurry to Mamie Rose's

house to report or to receive a lesson, although, sometimes, besides the lessons, other things were discussed. Then home and to other work.

I had left the attic and had taken a room, from where I could see Mamie Rose's roof. Arrived in the room, Bill would be given his walk and dinner, and then would be permitted to watch his master "making himself educated." The Standard Oil Company really ought to give me a discount. I was a good customer, yet received not all the benefit possible from the oil. My midnight oil often burned away into morning to no better purpose than to throw shadows of the sleeping student and his dog.

I blush with deep shame while making this confession; I invariably fell asleep over Ralph Waldo Emerson, while I had no trouble in keeping awake with Alexandre Dumas. It is not intended as a criticism of Emerson, although he could well afford to be criticised by me, but, generally speaking, it seems to one as unformed as myself, as if the truths of life, of thought, of science come to us always on stilts. I have not been able to learn very much from present day novels, and am, and always will be, compelled to fall back on old friends to supply me with the scaffolding for the rather meagre structure of my education. But, in spite

of loving them dearly, I often wish they were better adapted to my understanding.

So, with books and work and sweet intercourse with her whom I loved, time marched along with never-halting step and was recorded by me with most exact care. My calendars were model chronicles of time, and often did I wish they were practical statesmen, so that, by the usual means, they could be speeded.

With one exception nothing occurred to change the even tenor of our lives. That one exception has, to this very day left a peculiarly bitter taste in my mouth. I admit I am biased in the matter, still, I can be truthful, and so, that I may be better understood, the episode will be related here.

Late one Saturday night, I had occasion to call on one of my former pals, who was lying ill on a cot in a lodging house near Chinatown. On my way home, I passed the entrance to Chinatown—Pell street, beginning at the Bowery. I had just greeted a few of the men loafing about the front of Barney Flynn's place—the palace of the King of the Bowery —when I was hailed by some one.

I looked around and saw a party of sightseers coming in my direction. I had no more to do with that sort of business and intended to proceed on my way without paying any attention to them, but

was called by name by one of them, whose voice was familiar to me.

"What do you want?" I asked, and halted.

"What's the matter, Kil? Don't you remember your friends any more?"

I looked at the speaker and knew him again as one of my former pupils in the physical culture line. To mention his name will do no good and I will only say that he had been my favorite pupil and that I had believed a mutual liking existed between us. To prevent error, let me say that he had not been my patient, being neither too fat nor too lean, but had only taken a course in boxing to learn the manly art of self-defense. I had never seen him since the closing of my physical culture system and was overjoyed at this unexpected meeting.

He insisted that, for this one time only, and to oblige him, I should take him and the party of his friends through Chinatown and show them the most interesting sight-places. His friends were all from out of town, seemed to be more serious than the average sightseer, and were so strong in their persuasion that I could not refuse to act as their guide.

During our journey along the old scenes of my former days, my ex-pupil inquired into my present welfare and was very glad to hear I was getting along by other ways than those formerly employed

by me. Shortly before I parted from him, he told me that he had taken very little exercise of late and wanted me to box with him occasionally. I laughed at his proposition, told him that I considered myself retired for good, but did not think it advisable to tell him the true reason for my refusal. He kept on increasing the terms he was willing to pay me. I could not help thinking how the additional income would increase my deposit, thereby bringing me closer to the realization of my fondest dream, and, after some reflection, I agreed to call on him twice a week in the evening to "don the mitts" with him.

I had called on him several times before I told him how completely my life had been changed. In this Mamie Rose was not left out, and, you can rest assured, my accounts of her sweetness, devotion and beauty were given in the most glowing colors. My regard for this man was sincere and I supposed that all I told him was received in the proper spirit. I am not garrulous, but when it came to talking about my Mamie Rose, I knew no limits. My heart simply glowed with love, and I never grew tired to praise her, who was the truest and best.

My man never omitted to inquire after her and even sent her a few presents through me. Mamie Rose warned me against this, but the things were

beyond my means and added to her charm, and I would not listen to her.

At the end of one of our sessions, my ex-pupil extended an invitation to me. He had told his mother about me and she was very anxious to know me. At a certain date I was expected to call at his mother's residence—he, himself, lived in bachelor quarters—to meet a few friends there.

In this invitation Mamie Rose was also included.

I was bubbling over with excitement when telling her about the honor fallen to us. The quiet way in which she received my news disappointed me.

"Aren't you glad?" I asked. "Doesn't this prove that my friend is of the right calibre and wishes to honor both you and me by this invitation to his mother's house?"

"I wish I could feel quite sure on that point," said my little adviser, "but I am afraid that this invitation instead of bringing us pleasure, will bring just the opposite."

"Oh, girl o' mine," I coaxed, "I know this fellow and you don't. He is as good as gold and you may believe me that the invitation was extended in good faith."

I prevailed, and, on the appointed day, we invaded the most fashionable quarters of the city to enjoy the hospitality of our friends, the swells.

After we had passed the scrutiny of the man at the door, who had evidently been told of our coming, we were ushered into a drawing room. The only one I knew among the people was my ex-pupil, who quickly came forward to greet us and, then, to introduce us.

In spite of my lack of familiarity with the customs of the upper classes, I saw at a glance that the crowd had been expectant and was now disappointed.

To explain this disappointment, I should mention that my wearing apparel consisted of a black suit of good material and workmanship. My necktie was not colored in imitation of the rainbow and I had no occasion to look for a convenient spot for my expectorations. To carry the disappointment further, I acted contrarily to expectations at the dinner table. I neglected to carry the food to my mouth at the point of my knife and forgot to dip my finger into the salt-cellar.

My Mamie Rose was, as always, becomingly and properly gowned, and carried herself with a tact which fortified me against giving full reins to my temper.

Before entering the dining-room, the two freaks from the Bowery were made the centre of much curiosity. The men got around me, expecting to hear

choice stories of a certain kind, which contrary to accepted ideas, are not original in the Bowery, but are brought there by these pioneers of refined civilization. Their faces fell when I proved a decided failure at that sort of story-telling.

While in their midst, I did not forget Mamie Rose, who was the centre of the female freak-hunters. I compared her poise, her naturalness, to the artificial sprightliness of the society ladies, and found it so admirable and sufficient, that I could well afford to laugh at the winks and sneers exchanged behind her back.

One old woman, who with her gray hair, made a reverential picture of old age, deliberately surveyed my Mamie Rose through her lorgnette, as if the sweetest girl there or elsewhere were an escaped beast from the jungle. I could not bear this and started toward my girl. But she felt my coming, turned to me and showed in her eye the competency to withstand the illy veiled sneers and insults of that horde of her sisters.

A few minutes before dinner was announced, I had an opportunity to entreat Mamie Rose to have us leave.

"I did not want to come, but now we are here and here we stay," was her spirited dictum.

The ceremonial style of the meal and the con-

versation during it impressed me very little. The emptiness, the superficiality and the desire to "show off" was too palpable. I had not then—or now—reached that altitude of social perfection to make a meal the most important function of my day's work.

After we, the gentlemen, (I am afraid I was not included), had had our smoke and bout with the decanters, we joined the ladies in the drawing room. One of them had evidently been "laying for me," and captured me as soon as I entered. I was led to a settee and there we had a very, very serious talk.

She asked me this and she asked me that; if the dives were really as horrible as pictured; if it was quite safe to visit them; if I would consent to act as guide, for a generous compensation; if I had ever witnessed any "interesting" scenes down on the Bowery; and—spare me telling the rest.

My answers were not what were desired and, at last, I had a sample of frank truthfulness.

"Do you know, Mr. Kildare," said my resplendent companion, "you are a decided disappointment as a Bowery type, and not at all the entertaining chap we had been led to believe you to be."

"I am sure that is more the fault of time than of me," I replied. "Years often make us lose our entertaining qualities and, also, our attractiveness."

Our serious talk ended with this, still, she was a surprisingly well made-up woman.

At last the time for our departure came and I said my adieus. Our visit having proved more or less of a fiasco, one of the more intimate friends of the family chose this moment to make an attempt to save the "entertainment" from becoming an absolute fizzle.

"I say, Kildare," began this worthy young man, who was doubtless unacquainted with my past performances in the exhibition of my temper, "you've been in society now, and it would be very appropriate if you were to tell us your impressions in your own language—mind you, in your own language."

For once the pleading in the eye of my Mamie Rose was of no avail, and I started to give my impressions in "my own language," which proved sufficient, and did not oblige me to borrow the language of anybody else. My heart was soured. I did not care a snap of my fingers for the opinion of these people. To them I was a freak. What they were, what they are to me, need not be written here. I could have laughed at it all and would have been the only one really entertained. But to think that those people, purse and caste-proud, should include my Mamie Rose in their sport, made my blood run like boiling lava.

How far I might have gone in my outburst I cannot say. The same little hand, which had always been my guide, touched my arm, and I followed her out into the hall.

Before we departed, mother and son came to us with their sincere apologies. They were sincere, we felt that and accepted them. The son accused himself of having misunderstood the situation, in which I agreed with him. We were most graciously invited to dine with them "en famille," a few days hence, but while we left in the best understanding, the invitation was thankfully declined.

Again out in the air, under God's own heaven, we walked along silently for quite a while. My, but I felt ashamed, and was ready to hear with perfect composure my Mamie Rose's "I told you so."

But it did not come, and I began rehearsing my plea for pardon.

"Girl o' mine," I pleaded, "won't you forgive me this time, and I promise never——"

Ere I could finish, my pardon came with a silvery laugh, and the world went very well again.

Less than an hour after that, we were without the pale of society and, strange though it may seem, we were perfectly happy. My Mamie Rose was busy with her school-work, the mother was taking a well-earned rest—perhaps trying to take a little

nap in the rocker, and the little fellow and I were racing about the place to the tune of "The Rocky Road to Dublin," sung—let me call it that—by me in tones that shook the rafters.

Within the last twelve months, I have been honored on several occasions with invitations to functions of the upper set. They were extended in a different spirit than the first one, still, I could not see my way clear to accept them.

I want to say most emphatically that I am not of anarchistic or nihilistic tendencies. We all have our work cut out, and my work is not in the direction of stirring up emotional outbursts of charity in the drawing rooms of the upper circles.

THE JOURNEY HOME.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE JOURNEY HOME.

TIME passed on, bringing with it many of the things I was striving for. To become a learned man, a scientist, was never my desire, and, most likely, would have been an impossibility had I desired it. What I wanted was to be able to understand, to acquire a fair amount of mental balance, and then, to be able to put the acquired knowledge to the best use.

With the changing of my life, a changing of aims had also come, and, as in the old life, I was striving for success in the new life. The best way to make an ambition possible is to make the ambition reasonable.

I was still groping and groping, but thank God, I was groping forward. From whatever darkness still enshrouded me I kept steadily emerging closer to the light. I felt this and it made me feel that my probation should be ended.

Success without thrift is not well possible. My

material advancement had continued. I had again been promoted and had soared way above the lowly position of a "baggage-smasher." My salary was more than ample for my needs, and my deposit in the savings bank had grown wondrously.

Capitalists are proverbially aggressive. I, being one of the order acted accordingly and began to force matters. Women like to be coaxed and urged, and I did my proper share of it, because I knew it would result as 't did.

With the consent of the mother, the date of our wedding was set for February.

Again another glorious period began.

It was over two months until the fixed date on which we were to become man and wife, and we thought it necessary to inform ourselves concerning several practical details. As I had now almost succeeded in securing a mentor for life, we agreed to suspend our evening lecture tours, and spent most of our time in wandering from store to store.

The time for buying household goods had not yet come, but it seemed to delight Mamie Rose to gaze into the shop-windows. At times, we would even go so far as to enter a store and price the goods. It was then that my admiration for my little girl increased again.

I had long ago recognized that of common sense

I had only a very small share, and it was a splendid object-lesson to see my Mamie Rose dealing with the tradesmen. Calm and collected, she would listen to the smooth talk, and then act according to her own judgment, which was always sound. I knew nothing then of the sagacity of women shoppers.

One night I attempted to show off a little of my business sagacity. I chose a bad subject to practice on—diamonds. I can still hear her words ring in my ears. How foolish it was of poor people to stint and starve themselves for the sake of imitating flashy people by wearing jewels bought at the expense of something more useful. Diamonds and jewels were often the means of making the ignorance of the wearers more conspicuous. A woman who wears jewels knows that she needs other attractions than those given to her by nature.

Right here I got the best of my Mamie Rose.

"That may be all true, but nevertheless, I am going to buy you a ring, girl o' mine," I said very seriously.

"No, you will not, because you know I do not want it, and it will only offend me to have you give me one."

"What?" I retorted, playing my part with perfection. "Won't you permit me to buy you a ring for that day in February?"

"Oh, that is different, and—why are you laughing, Owen Kildare?"

Oh, girl o' mine, girl o' mine, why had it to be!
The day was only weeks distant.

* * * * * *

It was in January, and we were out on one of our nightly rambles in the shopping district. It was one of those mild winter evenings which make our climate so uneven. I was glad of it, because my Mamie Rose was a dainty, delicate little creature, and on cold evenings I was afraid that she might suffer from the weather.

We were looking at some furniture displayed in a window, when a shower fell. We were caught right squarely in it. I wanted her to seek refuge in a store, or at least, in a doorway, but we were only a short distance from her home, and she insisted on reaching it before the shower turned into a downpour.

I had a heavy overcoat over a stout suit of clothes.

"Let me put, at least, my overcoat over your shoulders," I insisted.

"No, you foolish boy, no," she laughed in answer. "Why, we're only a jump from home, and I am dressed warm enough to risk these few drops."

For once my Mamie Rose was wrong and it was the "once" that counted.

My misgivings were many when I left her at her home, but she assured me that she was in no danger of feeling the effects of the dampness.

I called on the following evening.

She had been in bed all day.

Of course it was nothing. "Just a trifling cold," that was all—but the beginning of the end had come.

She laughed at us for our fears.

"Why, I'll be up and about the same as ever to-morrow."

To-morrow! To-morrow multiplied into dread, fearsome weeks. Yes, for weeks she painfully lingered on her bed, and I marveled with awe at the heroic spirit of my little girl.

The weakness increased until she looked like a dainty statue hewn in alabaster.

It was only a trifle more than a week before the date set for our wedding. The physician stepped from her bed and beckoned me to follow him into the next room.

You know what he told me, and you know that I did not believe him.

"The end coming? Pshaw, what nonsense! Was there not a loving, a merciful God above us?"

I could not deny the evidence before me. She was getting worse every day, but I could not, would

not, believe that, which even her mother had accepted with resignation.

And next week we were to be married!

Spells came, during which reason left her, but in all her conscious moments she spoke to me with the wisdom of another world, and gave me then her legacy of purest, Godliest love.

Then came the day!

The afternoon sun was low when she asked me to lift her to the window. It was a humble neighborhood, devoid of all picturesqueness. All we saw in the last sheen of the sun's departing rays was a little girl on the opposite sidewalk, playing with a kitten. The picture was very simple, but my beloved one watched with smiling interest until her tired little head fell on my shoulder.

She was so light, one did hardly know anything was in his arms, and without disturbing her reposing position, I carried her back to her couch. Back in her bed, we clasped hands, as foolish lovers will do, and, still confident, still hoping, lulled by the quiet and her happy smile, I fell asleep.

Suddenly I was awakened.

Her hand was not in mine. Her mother, weeping, knelt beside the bed.

"Why——?"

I understood, and in that same moment the edi-

fice reared by her with such infinite care shook to its very foundations.

In the twinkling of an eye I was my old self again. The brute, so long subdued and partly tamed, arose in me with fury.

I drove them from the room. No one, except me, had a right there. And then, alone with her, I reveled in my sorrow, or burst into wild rage.

There, on the dome above us, were all the glistening orbs, which she had taught me were radiant evidences of God.

What mockery!

I rushed to the casement, and bellowing in delirium, I shook my fist at moon and stars—and cursed the Mighty Presence.

Then came an interval.

For a time I was cool and realized.

Her soul had flown to the realms above.

Alone with her, I sat for minutes, hours, eternities, it seemed, and every lovely feature of my Mamie Rose became forever engraven upon my mind and heart. My right hand was resting on hers, my left was hanging motionless by my side. Something rubbed against it. It was Bill, and all he had been to me was forgotten. No one, not even he, had a right there.

Again the beast flared up, and for the first and

last time my Bill felt the brutal force of my wrath.

He returned defiantly from the corner where he had landed and spoke his valid claim:

"I have a right here, Kil. You loved her, so did I, and I can understand your sorrow."

I let him stay, and through that bitter night man and dog kept their silent vigil beside the bier of her who had loved both.

Perhaps I was wrong to profane the quiet chamber by the presence of my Bill, but I know she would have sanctioned it—we three were square, honest comrades.

With the coming of the same sun whose going she and I had watched only a few hours ago, came saner, holier thoughts. A message seemed to float to me from her sacred lips.

I knelt and prayed, "Thy will be done."

* * * * * *

Spare me telling you where, how and when she was buried. What difference does it make to you how she went her last journey, never to return in the flesh? Whether we had her buried in mountains of her favorite flower or sent her away in the pine box of the pauper, is of no consequence to you. She was nothing to you, she was mine, all mine; in life or in death, on earth or in heaven.

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THE INHERITANCE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE INHERITANCE.

LITTLE more is to be told.

Time has smoothed the jagged edges, and I have never again dared to measure my puny wisdom to His. Yet, and there is a forgiveness, no day passes without the question: "Is what I have learned worth the tuition fee?"

True, my knowledge is trifling when compared to yours, but we also differ in our "Whence."

To me it is all a miracle. Before it I did not even grope about in the darkness searching for light.

I was satisfied.

Now I know at least that there is a soul, a mind within me, and that they were given for a purpose. There are limits to my understanding, and why it was that just as the portals of the better life were slowly opening to me, my little guide should fall exhausted on the threshold, is now a mystery to me, but will some day be answered.

Soon after the funeral the mother and the little

brother went West to the elder son to make their future home with him. That left just Bill and me.

We got used to it in time. We had always had the same likes and hobbies, and we found ways to spend our time with profit to ourselves.

Down here, where we live, there are few trees and flowers, and even air is at a premium. Air is necessary, and Bill and I have devised a scheme to get it as pure as possible under the circumstances.

The roaring bustle of lower Broadway turns into deadly silence with the fall of evening. For miles, excepting a watchman or policeman, you will scarcely see a living being. That is where Bill and I enjoy our pleasant pastime. After the day's work is ended we travel through the quiet streets until we reach our stoop in the yawning dark cañon of the skyscrapers. We do not talk much; there is better intercourse.

From where we sit we gaze up at the skies and greet the merry twinkle of our glistening friends. Then through the dancing myriads of celestial bodies our vision winds its way on through the mazes, and does not stop until it sees the most beloved spirit in all the glory of the heavenly home. Every star reflects her face in brilliants, and from behind the hazy veilings of the cloud-smile her eyes shine radiantly. Bill and I go home, not lonely, not

sad or soured, for we have spent the hours in the anteroom of heaven and have learned another lesson in the quiet night.

The firmament and the stars are for all of us; their glories shine for all mankind. You, gentle reader, may learn to know them—to own them—but, alas! you cannot own my Bill. Perhaps you would not care for him. He never was handsome, and now he is getting old and might not be to you a pleasant companion. But he has traveled with me along life's highway; he has never told a lie; he has been loyal and true, and there's not in all this world another dog like my good old pal.

For some time after the going-home of my Mamie Rose I was ill, but found my position still open for me after regaining my health. I was not so strong as I had been, but did not wish to neglect my work, and, overtasking myself, an accident permanently incapacitated me for that kind of employment. I had to submit to an operation—to be repeated later—and the expense of it, with the long and enforced idleness, soon exhausted the remainder of my savings.

It was then that the old past crooned the tempter's lay. But for only a very short time was I near the brink, from which it would have been easy to drop back into the black abyss from whence I had come.

I overcame my temptation, and, since then, have had no fear that I would revert to my former ways of wickedness. I have learned to understand life, feel mind and soul within me, and I want to go on, not back.

And, besides, there is the legacy of her who has taught and inspired me.

Some who will approve of my determination to go on might disapprove of the immediate methods employed by me.

I had to go to work and was compelled to accept the first opportunity offered to me. I became a dishwasher in a downtown lunchroom at three dollars a week.

It was unsavory work, but it was work, and left me time in the evenings and on Sundays to live in my books.

Bill and I were again reduced to the attic. It did not affect us very much, as we were both in a mood in which we did not care for the nicety of our environment.

One day I heard that a man I knew wanted to see me to tell me about a better job, which, however, was in the dishwashing line, too. He was staying at a lodging house. He was not in when I called there, and I sat down in the reading room to wait for him. The tables were covered with daily papers

which are furnished free by the lodging house keepers, and I took one to while the time away.

It was the Evening Journal. I glanced through the news columns and then meant to drop the paper. The only page which had absolutely no interest for me was the women's page. Once, indeed, it had helped to built castles in Spain, and the patterns of gay frocks and dresses had made our "dreams to come true" more enjoyable, but now—it was all different.

Throwing the paper to the table it happened that just that women's page was uppermost. I did not read it, but every once in a while my glance would sweep the page in rambling look. At the bottom of it there was a caption in big type: "The Evening Journal's True Love Story Contest." The caption was so conspicuous that my eye could not help meeting it every time I looked at the page. My wait was long. I did not care to go over the news columns again, and at last I began reading the True Love Story.

It was not a bad story, still the features of it were not very extraordinary. I finished it, and then soliloquized.

"If the story of this man is worth printing, why not mine? All there is to his story is that he and the girl had a quarrel before the marriage event-

ually took place. Neither one of them had to undergo a self-sacrifice. Would it be sacrilegious to tell the story of my Mamie Rose? Or would it not rather inspire greater unselfishness in those who are in love?"

I discussed this question with myself for some time, and then came to the conclusion that the memory of my little girl would not be profaned by having the story of our love told. To this very day I am not sure whether I did right in giving way to my inclination. Perhaps I acted indelicately, but on the other hand I am not refined or cultured, and the dictates of my heart are generally decisive in a question of this kind.

I did not have a scrap of paper in my pocket, but saw a piece of yellow wrapping paper on the floor. I examined its cleanliness, and, finding it fairly clean, began to write my story. The conditions were rather severe for an amateur author. The story had to be told in less than seven hundred and fifty words.

After the last line was written I hurried to the office of the Evening Journal, not trusting the stability of my impulse. A very imposing young man condescended to receive my contribution, and, instead of reading it immediately, threw it carelessly aside.

"That is a story for the 'Prize Contest,'" I whispered, falteringly.

"Is it? I thought it was an editorial on the relative positions of England and Russia in Manchuria. Anyway, don't let it worry you, it won't worry us. We haven't anything to do with that kind of stuff; it goes up to the editor of the women's page."

If that young man could have read my thoughts he would have been surprised to find how near he was to trouble. The story of my only blessing called "stuff" by that young whippersnapper!

Not until many months later did I understand that "stuff" meant anything and everything from an essay to a two-line joke.

I firmly believe that I was the first buyer of the Evening Journal on the following day. I turned to the women's page, but did not find my story. The following day brought the same experience, and I felt certain then that my "stuff" had found its way into the waste basket.

On the third day I saw the name, Owen Kildare, for the first time in print. I had won the prize and received my check. My elation knew no bounds, and when, after a few days, letters full of sympathy reached me, I was certain that I had not done wrong in writing that little story.

My thoughts found something new to think

about. If this story, written under adverse circumstances and without any preparation, could win a prize, why could I not write other stories about the men and women I had known, and about the things and scenes I had seen and am still seeing? If, as in some of the stories which I had read in reputable magazines, untruths and deliberate misrepresentations can find a place in print, the truth about us—the people of the slums—should surely be also worthy of publication.

My mind was full of incidents witnessed by me through the many years I spent in slummery, and, without any difficulty, I wrote a story of the life I know best.

I sent the story to McClure's Magazine. It was accepted and partly paid for, but later returned to me because it was a trifle "too true." I sold it three days later to the Sunday Press, and the editor, Mr. William Muller, invited me to become a contributor. The invitation was gladly accepted, and short stories, editorials and special articles, all treating of my peculiar phase, have since then been written by me for that paper.

During my connection with the Press I learned much from Andrew McKenzie, who succeeded William Muller as Sunday editor, and who never tired of pruning my "copy" with kind care. There

also I met one of the finest men that it has ever been my pleasure to know, Hilary Bell, who, besides being the critic of the paper, was an artist and litérateur of high degree, and so devoted to his work that the zeal with which he pursued his studies brought him to a much too early end. Bright, staunch, manly, Hilary Bell is no more, but his memory will live forever in my grateful heart.

In the fall of 1901 the Sunday Herald published a story, "How To Be a Gentleman on Ten Thousand a Year." I happened to read it and, providing one has the other and more essential qualities, thought it no hard matter to keep from starvation on that amount. The story was written in a spirit of complaint, reciting how difficult it was to be a "somebody" in society on that figure. Down here on the Bowery and East Side we have gentlemen, though some may doubt it, and they manage to retain their claim to the title on very much less than ten thousand. The contrast was so wide that I could not refrain from writing about it and submitting it to the Herald.

Mr. Dinwiddie, the Sunday editor, sent me a letter asking me to call. I had called the story "How To Be a Gentleman on Three Dollars a Week." The editor thought my story a trifle exaggerated, and it took some time to convince him that the truth

had not been stretched. But at last the story was printed, and I followed it up with other stories about my people.

In January, 1902, Mr. Hartley Davis, the editor of the Sunday News, invited me to become a steady contributor to that paper. The News had always been the paper of the Fourth Ward, and you can easily imagine what a stir it created among some of my old friends when they saw my name so frequently at the bottom of a story. In the "front rooms" of many humble homes down there I have seen some of my stories hang proudly, and framed, in the place of honor on the wall. And it has made me feel good. Not so much because of the self-satisfaction, although let me be frank and state that very often when I know and feel I have written a fairly good story, I cannot hide my pride in my work and glory in it, for it proves to me that all was not in vain—but because it shows that even these poor people whom you think so vile, so demoralized, are glad to recognize it with sincerity, when one from among them succeeds in climbing a few steps on the ladder of useful decency and manhood.

During my connection with the Sunday News I had a chat with Hartley Davis which was the starting point of this book. I had returned to the office from an assignment, and, after reporting to the edi-

tor, made a few comments on the scenes just left by me. We fell into a discussion on the slums, and Hartley Davis congratulated me on my escape from them. My origin was not known to my readers at the time. This point was accentuated by Davis.

"Kildare, if the readers of the Sunday News knew how you were developed from a seller of the paper on the streets to a writer for it, they would have greater faith in your stories of your people and in you. A chance was offered to you and you took advantage of it. When a man is a Bowery tough at thirty, unable to read, and at thirty-seven starts in to earn his living by writing, it is worth the telling."

I said: "It was not a chance, it was a miracle."

There was a difference of opinion. To settle the difference and to adopt the suggestion made, I wrote my story for the Sunday News and was surprised at the sympathetic response it awakened.

Below, you will find a copy of the epitome written by Hartley Davis at the publication of my story:

NEW YORK SUNDAY NEWS.

February 2, 1902.

AN EPITOME OF THE CAREER OF OWEN KILDARE.

That a man should, with the aid of a good woman, raise himself from the depths of brutish degrada-

tion to an honest manhood and regard for things pure and holy is a fine thing.

That a man should reach the age of thirty without being able to read and write, and then, within a few years, with the aid of this woman and through his own indomitable will and energy, gain such mastery over the art of writing as to be able to tell such a story as is here presented, is so strange, so unprecedented as to warrant unbelief.

Owen Kildare is a real man and that is his real name. He is widely known on the Bowery, where he lives. The writer of this knew him when he was a bartender in Steve Brodie's saloon and when he was a "bouncer" in the frightful dive to which he refers.

His article is printed as it was written, with no more editing than the "copy" of the average trained writer would receive, and it has a power that is rare in these days. Glance at this epitome of his life, and wonder.

1864—Born in Catharine street. Orphaned in his infancy and adopted by a childless couple.

1870—Became a newsboy in the gang of which Timothy D. Sullivan was the leader, and fended for himself.

1880—A "beer slinger" in a tough Bowery dive and a pugilist. His fighting capacity and bru-

tishness made him a bouncer in one of the most infamous resorts New York has ever known.

1894—Met the little school teacher through protecting her from insult, who taught him to read and write and who made a man of him. Gave up working in dives, where he made sixty dollars a week, more or less dishonestly, to work for eight dollars a week.

1900—Death of the little school teacher one month before they were to be married.

1902—From a newsboy, selling the Daily News, he became a writer for this newspaper.

In no profession are the changes as frequent as in journalism, and not long after the appearance of my story, I became a writer on the staff of the Evening World. While there I "ran" a series of sketches on the editorial page of the paper. They were written in language closely resembling the real idiom of the Bowery. I called the series "The Bowery Girl Sketches," and their indorsement by the readers was exceedingly flattering.

My experiment in Bowery language attracted the attention of William Guard, editor of The Sunday Telegraph, who made me a very favorable proposition. My stories in that paper were written in Bow-

ery "slang," which is not slang at all, but merely the primitive way of expression my fellows use. The stories were signed by "The Bowery Kipling," a sobriquet which my old and good friend, John J. Jennings, of the Evening World, had given me. At no time during my work for the Telegraph had the "other" Kipling occasion to sue me for libel or infringement.

This newspaper experience has been of great value to me, but it is not the career I would care to pursue for the rest of my life In it reward is too often the consequence of accident, instead of being the logical sequel of merit and striving. The constant physical and mental strain affords many excuses for stimulants, and absolutely temperate newspaper men are among the rarities. As said before, the changes are many in editorial offices, and at every shifting of editors, the staffs are also included and obliged to decamp. There seems to be no stability as far as permanent employment is concerned, unless a contract is signed. But contracts are only signed with the stars of journalism and the "small fry" is always in fear and trembling about their "jobs. Still, personally, throughout my short stay in newspaperdom, I have had many kindnesses and courtesies extended to me, and the schooling was appreciated and digested by me.

The Inheritance.

In January, 1903, I was asked by the Success Magazine to write my story for that publication. While preparing the story I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Hall Caine, the distinguished novelist from the Isle of Man. He has often been made the subject of much criticism, but, this being a story of facts and not a critical essay, I can only say that Hall Caine is a man worth knowing, and I value very highly the letter he sent me after reading the story for Success in manuscript.

I herewith append the letter:

"My Dear Mr. Kildare: I have read your story, and I have been deeply touched by it. Nothing more true or human has come my way for many a day. It is a real transcript from life, and that part of it which deals with the little lady who was so great and so ennobling an influence in your life, brought tears to my eyes and the thrill to my heart. I am not using the language of flattery when I say that no great writer would be ashamed of the true delicacy and reserve with which you have dealt with the more solemn and sacred passages of your life.

"It was a true pleasure to me to meet you personally, and no conversation I have had on this side of the ocean has moved me to more sympathy. I wish you every proper success, and I feel sure that

such a life as yours has been, and such a memory as brightens and solemnizes your past, can only lead you from strength to strength, from good to better.

"That this may be so will be my earnest wish for you long after I have left your American shores.

"With kindest greetings, HALL CAINE."

The story was published in the February number of Success, and the response was—I do not know how to describe it—astounding, amazing, yes, almost embarrassing. Over four thousand letters reached me from all parts of the country, and the editor received letters from ministers informing him that the story had been read by them from the pulpit in place of the regular sermon. My heart throbbed when I saw how the miracle performed by my Mamie Rose in the name of God had moved the many, and again had I cause to thank my Maker for having sent her to me—if even for so short a time.

Through Mr. Powlison I was invited to speak before several branches of the Y. M. C. A., and, though my delivery and elocution are very much at variance with oratorical methods, the story of the miracle proved again that our God is the same God, the God of old and of new.

I believe that I can see my path before me. I

shall write. Brilliancy, elegance of diction and a choice vocabulary will not be found in my stories and articles, but the truth is there, as I have seen it, as I have lived it, and that is something.

This is the direction in which my ambition lies. I want to be a writer with a clearly defined purpose. I want to tell the plain truth about men and things as I know them and see them every day in the homes of the tenements, in those abodes of friendless, hopeless men, many of whom were once as good and respectable as any of you. I want to dedicate my pen, no matter how ungifted, to their service, that others may know, as I know, of the places and conditions where fellow-beings begin to rail against their God and men because they deem themselves forgotten. I want to show that often their hearts hunger most and not their stomachs, and want to ask you to believe that they, as well as others, cannot only feel hunger and cold, but can also love and despair.

I feel that there is work in this field for me, and it is my ambition to become successful in it and worthy of it, as a living testimony that one of God's sweetest daughters has not lived and died in vain.

This is the story of the miracle wrought by my Mamie Rose.

THE END.